
Music Beyond Sound

How Hearing Ability
Influences Music Perception

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Introduction

My career, like that of Beethoven's and a number of others, is an impossibility. There are only three possible explanations: I am not a musician, I'm not deaf, or the general understanding of the categories of "Deaf" or "Music" must be incorrect.

-Evelyn Glennie¹

Musicians generally do not divide themselves with respect to their ability to hear. Instead, musicians rally around how or why they create music: players self-assemble under a common genre, instrument, style or type of ensemble. Musicians rarely question how a peer perceives sound if that sound is recognized as musical. However, hearing ability is an important distinction that elucidates important and unobvious opportunities for exploring what music means to musicians. This project is a study of musicians who fall at different places on the continuum that connects hearing and deafness. The goal of this study is to create a starting point for musicians to explore how others who share their passion can approach and perceive music in radically different ways. This study does not aim to present quantitative numbers that represent a correlation between hearing ability and music perception in all musicians. For the purposes of this project a musician is defined as an individual who considers music a significant part of his or her life beyond listening to it; being a professional is not required but some experience performing or recording is necessary. Although instrumental musicians were not considered exclusively, only one subject focused her musical energy toward singing.

¹ Glennie, Evelyn. "Disability Essay." *Evelyn Glennie Live*. May 10, 2006. <<http://www.evelyn.co.uk>>.

The first section of this study presents sketches of interviewed musicians to give the reader an idea of the circumstances that maintain a given interviewee's ideas about music. The baseline questions used during the interviews are provided as Appendix A. The interview transcripts on which the sketches are based are provided as Appendix B.

The synthesis section then attempts to draw parallels and highlight differences between the ideas gathered through interview. These parallels and differences are presented to prompt questions in the reader's mind about his or her own views about music; they are the springboard into self-reflection this study aims to be. The most important conclusion this study has found is the fluidity of the dependence of music on ear-based hearing. Subjects with and without hearing disabilities commented that sound is not always necessary to experience music; for one subject, dreams produce the musical benchmark used in that subject's work as a composer.

Over half of the interview subjects have had substantial changes in their hearing ability. Most of these changes were a loss of natural ear-based hearing and an adaptation to hearing aids or [a] cochlear implant[s]. It is extremely compelling, especially for musicians who might face hearing challenges in the future, that nearly every subject who has faced hearing challenges has found ways to keep music in his or her life. For musicians, music persists despite hearing loss.

Subject Sketches

The interviews for this study were conducted confidentially. For this reason, personally identifying information, including name and gender, has been randomly assigned. Evelyn Glennie's interview is the one exception; her interview was conducted previously by a different author and all information presented has been published previously.²

This study is entirely dependent on the subject interviews of the following individuals. For this reason, the author feels it is imperative to give the reader a sense of the musical and hearing history of these individuals before the interview responses are compared and contrasted.

Casey

Casey is a 19 year old pianist who has chosen not to make music his profession. Casey lost much of his hearing at age two and has severe bilateral high frequency hearing loss. He cannot hear anything above approximately 1000 Hz. Casey wore hearing aids until he was about ten years old. He has since chosen to accept his unaided hearing ability and actively refuses both hearing aids and cochlear implants. While Casey sees his hearing ability as a defining part of who he is, he doesn't focus on it or treat it in a special manner and doesn't want to be viewed as "special".

² Havlik, Caryn. "Evelyn Glennie - First and Foremost." *Drummergirl.com*. 11 Apr. 2006. <<http://www.drummergirl.com/interviews/glennie/glennie.htm>>.

Casey's hearing loss didn't prevent him from becoming involved in music at a very young age. Demonstrating an innate ability to play his aunt's electric organ from age four, Casey started piano lessons soon after. Casey's attitude toward his hearing is similarly manifested in his musicality; he wants to be viewed as a pianist, not a pianist with a hearing loss. Casey struggled until college to combat the feeling that he was trying to prove he wasn't just overcoming an obstacle by playing the piano. Since entering college he has seen that pressure disappear.

Casey performed on the piano growing up and continues to play with friends in college. He doesn't necessarily enjoy playing in front of large groups although he has significant experience doing so.

Frank

Frank is a professional musician. He has played the violin in more than one professional orchestra and is an accomplished conductor. Frank started playing the violin at age six. He knew from an early age that music was an important aspect of his life. As a child he enjoyed all sorts of musical interactions, from sight singing to playing the percussion in his school's band (due to the lack of an orchestra). He took lessons on the violin throughout his schooling years. For a significant portion of his teenage years Frank was in the hospital. Listening to the radio during these solitary periods led him to decide music was the path he wanted to follow for his life.

At the end of high school Frank realized that he didn't quite have the technical ability to go to a music conservatory and study violin; he took two years off after high school and learned a concerto each month. This period of intense study helped him develop the skills that admitted him to a well known conservatory. After his time at the conservatory he joined a professional symphony. This first symphonic experience was terrible for Frank. He was able to audition for several other professional orchestras only to miss the cut, once by only one person. His failure to get into a better orchestra disillusioned him from music for a short period and he almost left music to join his father's photography business. His last attempt auditioning for a different professional orchestra proved successful and Frank has been a member of this ensemble for the past 41 years. Frank has performed internationally with his current symphony and has soloed and performed chamber music many times in his career.

Frank's conducting career arguably began when he expressed interest and demonstrated competence conducting while a conservatory student. While he didn't begin regularly conducting at the conservatory, later in life he was able to start conducting as a substitute in two community orchestras. These opportunities blossomed into becoming the full time conductor for both orchestras. He is currently the conductor of a local community orchestra.

Teri

Music is one of the most important things in Teri's life. Teri is a 31 year old pianist who started playing when he was five. He is also profoundly deaf, blind, and

intellectually challenged. Teri was born mildly hearing impaired, not profoundly deaf, but had sudden onset hearing loss at age 18 in his second year at Berklee College of Music. Six months of deaf-blindness ensued before Teri received his first cochlear implant. While music was difficult for many years after implantation, he kept playing the piano. Five years after Teri received his first implant his hearing ability with the implant radically changed and he became much more active in music again. Teri is now bilaterally implanted, though he currently hears much better with his first implant.

Teri grew up playing classical piano but switched to jazz when he was 18. Teri has produced multiple recorded albums and performs on a semi-regular basis with jazz groups.

Ali

Ali is 70 years old and received her cochlear implant at age 64, between five and ten years after she experienced gradual severe hearing loss. Ali was raised by her family in conference centers and communes in Holland and England. She later spent four years in a commune in Paraguay. Music, mostly singing, was an integral part of communal life. In light of this, Ali grew up singing in her daily life activities and considers vocal music a very important part of her. She is not a professional musician.

Ali has continued singing with her implant but acknowledges that music listening is more difficult to enjoy; where an extensive record collection used to play an active

role in her life, a newly refurbished but hardly used record player sits in her living room. While Ali no longer performs with a choir, she still sings traditional songs from her childhood at local club “open microphone” nights.

Pat

Pat is a non-professional bassoon player. Music, whether in the form of solo work, chamber music or orchestral playing, has always played a big role in Pat’s life; he started playing the piano in kindergarten and picked up the clarinet in middle school with the intent of switching to bassoon. Pat grew up around music; his sister played the oboe. Pat stopped studying piano his sophomore year in high school and focused all his musical attention on the bassoon. Pat has performed at many levels and continues to perform as a soloist and orchestral player while in college.

Alex

Alex is a passionate, nearly professional bass player. Currently in her third year at the New England Conservatory of Music, Alex started playing the piano at age five. She started playing the acoustic bass in fourth grade and is now an active bass, guitar, drum, piano and Gimbri (the Moroccan bass) player.

Alex has directed her bass playing toward jazz. She has played in countless combos and recently toured China. Alex is also a composer; one of her songs was just announced as the winner in a major worldwide composition competition.

Evelyn Glennie

Evelyn Glennie is the world's first professional solo percussionist. She has performed internationally with most of the world's highest acclaimed ensembles. She is a Grammy winner and three time nominee, she has produced 22 solo albums and she is a recipient of the Order of the British Empire, her country's highest honor.

Glennie played the mouth organ and clarinet as a child. At age 12 Glennie became profoundly deaf due to nerve damage.³ Her deafness did not undermine her desire to be a professional musician. Following elementary school, Glennie attended the Royal Academy of Music in London. Since her time at the Royal Academy, Glennie has continually won acclaim for her musical ability and creativity. She has had 133 pieces commissioned and maintains a collection of over 1400 percussive instruments, many of which she has invented herself. Although the media has drawn a lot of attention toward the fact that Glennie is profoundly deaf, Glennie doesn't actively focus on that aspect of herself. In fact, she doesn't mention her hearing ability in her professional promotion materials at all. Glennie maintains that while she is profoundly deaf, certain aspects of her hearing, such as how sound interacts with a room, are better than nearly anyone else's.

John

John is a 61 year old professional musician. John began piano lessons at age four and clarinet at age ten. A hand injury prevented him from playing any other

³ "Evelyn Glennie." Answers.com. 13 Apr. 2006. <<http://www.answers.com/topic/evelyn-glennie>.>

instruments. John also enjoyed singing and did so regularly in choruses at school and church. In college John found that the band was not his cup of tea and devoted his musical energy to singing. Early in college John recognized his interest in conducting. By the time he was a senior he put on an opera and was the conductor of the student led campus orchestra. After graduation he was encouraged to attend the Julliard School of Music, to which he successfully auditioned and matriculated in 1968. Music has defined John's life. He says, "From really the age of 19 until now, it has all been 'what is best for *the conducting*.'"

John has had a successful career as a professional conductor. In 2004 he experienced sudden bilateral sensorineural hearing loss. John currently is still in the process of getting used to wearing bilateral hearing aids and has tried to adapt his musical life to this huge change. John has chosen to pursue new opportunities in music and is currently in his valedictory season in his current conducting position.

Barbara

Barbara has been partially deaf her entire life. She discovered her hearing impairment rather late, at age seven, through a school-based hearing test. She was diagnosed with sensorineural hearing loss. At age 14 she was diagnosed with *retinitis pigmentosa*. Barbara has struggled with her vision her entire life and finally became blind in 2000. Also in 2000 she suddenly became completely deaf and was without sight and sound for nearly a year. In 2001 Barbara got a cochlear implant. Barbara plays the piano and guitar, but considers composition her musical passion. She has had some of her songs recorded professionally.

Synthesis

Hearing Ability and the Definition of Hearing

Hearing ability is often viewed as a quantitative measure: what sound pressure levels can the brain perceive at a given frequency. An audiogram displays an ear's frequency-dependent hearing threshold values and is a common representation of an individual's hearing ability. For example, when trying to describe his hearing ability, Casey volunteered his most recent audiogram which showed severely depressed threshold values (near zero) for frequencies at or above 1000 Hz. This quantitative data collaborated well with Casey's description that he can hear pitches up to two octaves above middle c (261.6 Hz). A given individual might have very different audiograms for each ear. Indeed, nearly all of the hearing impaired individuals interviewed mentioned that they had a "better" ear. John is a rare exception to this: his hearing loss profiles are identical in both ears.

However, when music is included in the framework of hearing capability, the responses and interpretations of "hearing ability" varied wildly and sometimes had nothing to do with what might be displayed on an audiogram. To investigate the self perception of an individual's hearing ability, a number line from one to eight was shown or explained to each interviewee. One was labeled "hearing" and eight was labeled "deaf". The subject was then asked to rank his or her hearing ability and provide justification. While most subjects responded to this ranking question as one might expect (hearing individuals responded at or near one, hearing impaired individuals' responses ranged from four to seven, additionally dependent on the use or lack thereof of an implant or hearing aid) when the discussion mentioned music

the responses changed. Frank's response was particularly interesting; he placed himself between a two and three and felt that was generous. Upon further explanation, this was not because he didn't have normal hearing. In fact, he said that earlier in life he would have ranked himself even closer to deaf. For Frank, hearing is much more than the ability to perceive sound in his ears. In response to how he could improve his self-perception to a "one" he responds:

I don't think it's possible, because there is always something more. Which is why I am probably being a little bold to put myself so close to two, but I strive to be in that area. Perfection is not possible. I hear more than a lot of people. There are people who hear more than I do. I don't envy them.

Frank is talking about his ability to listen to music. He defines hearing in a context that includes musicianship, emotion, the nature of listening, and intent, far beyond frequency-dependent threshold levels. Frank explains that when he hears music, his brain cannot help but be intensely critical in such a manner that he might be self critical if he was performing or conducting. Hearing music can be much more than merely acknowledging tones.

Evelyn Glennie's ideas about hearing are eye opening. She explains,

Hearing is basically a specialized form of touch. Sound is simply vibrating air which the ear picks up and converts to electrical signals, which are then interpreted by the brain. The sense of hearing is not the only sense that can do this, touch can do this too. If you are standing by the road and a large truck goes by, do you hear or feel the vibration? The answer is both. With very low frequency vibration the ear starts becoming inefficient and the rest of the body's sense of touch starts to take over. For some reason we tend to make a distinction between hearing a sound and feeling a vibration, in reality they are the same thing ... Deafness does not mean that you can't hear, only that there is something wrong with the ears. Even someone who is totally deaf can still hear/feel sounds.⁴

1) ⁴ "Hearing Essay." Evelyn Glennie Live. 12 Apr. 2006. <http://www.evelyn.co.uk/live/hearing_essay.htm>.

For Glennie, hearing isn't just what reaches the brain through the ears. Although Glennie wasn't asked to evaluate her hearing ability on the continuum mentioned above, she sees herself as able to hear certain things better than nearly everyone else, hearing or deaf. For example, she can describe the air thickness in a performance space. More than one hearing impaired subject was similarly frustrated with the common perception that ear-based hearing is a necessary precursor for musicians. Casey comments,

There is this thing about what music means to me and how I perceive it and what I do with it; I don't just ask what other people who are hearing think what it means to me and how I perceive it ... [this idea that] music is sound, if you can't hear sound that limits your ability to participate in music, and I think a lot of people have that as their first perception, and that is very false for me...

One of the most interesting aspects of how the interview subjects defined their hearing is the fact that their definitions have changed. As mentioned above, Frank's definition of hearing is intimately related to his analytical ability to process what he's hearing; as his analytical listening ability has improved, so has his self-perceived hearing ability. As John has become accustomed to hearing with hearing aids, his ability to discern musical qualities has improved. For the subjects with cochlear implants, how they define hearing changed both as they got their implant turned on and again later after having the implant for a significant amount of time. Teri explained that immediately after he received his implant his piano sounded like a computer. Five or so years after getting implanted Teri says the piano again sounded like a piano; the sound was enjoyable again. Ali is still getting used to how music sounds through her implant. Before she became deaf, she explained that

while she felt she often sang out of tune, and was once told so, she didn't hear things out of tune. Singing with the implant, Ali not only feels she sings out of tune, she feels that the music she hears is a bit out of tune. Barbara's implant hearing comprehension has steadily improved in the last five years; while she didn't comment that this change has affected how she hears musical tones, she says she can now understand lyrics, something that she was never able to do with her naturally impaired hearing before going deaf.

Hearing ability and the definition of hearing is thus far more complicated than what is represented on an audiogram. For musicians, pitch, voice, touch, vibration, analytical ability and the possibility for change all comprise hearing.

Music and Daily Life

It is important to understand the unobvious effects hearing ability and music have on one's in daily life. For instance, how does a deaf-blind person learn new music? Teri reads Braille music to learn both fully annotated manuscripts and jazz lead sheets. He learns the right hand while using his left to read the Braille and then switches to learn the left hand. Teri is not able to learn music by just listening to it with his implant. Just as sight is critical when most musicians read music, touch is Teri's connection with printed music. Additionally, because Teri uses both touch and sound to communicate music to his brain, he occasionally practices productively on an electric keyboard that isn't turned on.

Casey's adaptation to his partial hearing ability is to learn the music on a part of the piano he can hear. Once he has learned the music, he simply moves his hands to the correct position and relies on muscle memory and touch to play the notes where they are intended. While this works most of the time, it is nearly impossible for Casey to hear mistakes in the upper registers of the piano. He overcomes this by having people who can hear what he can't listen and critique his playing. This method of learning is completely ingrained in Casey's playing; he doesn't think twice about it.

For Frank, music is present in his brain even when he isn't hearing it with his ears. He explains he is always counting and analyzing rhythms. He will often unknowingly vocalize patterns or melodies. Frank says that his incessant counting helps him as a musician. Going up and down the stairs can be an exercise in

syncopation or in how to count in a more global sense; how to remember longer rhythmic patterns when subunits of these patterns might be much easier to focus on.

Alex's moods are directly influenced by the feel of the music she plays. The "aesthetic of cool" Alex sees in jazz has made her more patient than she used to be. Beyond frame of mind, music is a lifestyle for Alex. She says, "...speaking of my personal life, music has a huge effect on that, because almost all of my friends are musicians now. We're very much in our own community, constantly talking about music, sharing music, attending each others performances. It's a great way of life."

Much like Frank's constant internal rhythm, Ali has a constant monologue of song in her head. She explains when asked if she sings to herself during the day, "I think so, yes, definitely, yeah; all the time now, by myself. I wake up singing, practically. And as soon as I have my cochlear implant in, whatever song is in my head starts coming out." For Ali, the singing has always been there regardless of hearing ability, it's just a part of who she is.

Music has thus far been explained as an inseparable part of several subjects' lives. Pat, however, feels differently. He feels that music is, "portioned" from the rest of his life: "It's kind of just different from everything else." Pat is able to have what he explains is a college life and a musical life, choice being a major difference between the two. He says, "One thing, especially about me, is I really like music because it's something I do because I want to, sort of, because it isn't related to

specifically, [his college], and I think I love it because it can't be taken away from me.”

The reader should realize that apart from the practice or performance elements of a musician's life, music manifests itself in radically different ways. While hearing ability is sometimes the reason for adapting different strategies for producing music, all the subjects who mentioned such habits also expressed that these habits are second nature to them, that it is how they are a musician.

Music Beyond Sound

Subjects mentioned several aspects of music that had nothing to do with the production of sound. Alex remarks, “I can't really describe why music makes you feel so amazing, it just does. It's like magic. It's so powerful.” For Alex,

[Music] is a whole environment. More powerful than looking in a picture, it can take you to a different place, mood, memory, emotion. If you walk around with your iPod on and do the exact same thing, go the exact same places, but with different music, it will be a totally different experience.

Casey alludes to the connections between music and dance, especially when his hands are moving on parts of the piano where he can't hear the sound they are making, “It's like the rhythm and it's like the shockwaves coming through your arms and it's a sense of where your arms are in space and music becomes a lot more like dancing.”

If hearing can be defined as a sense beyond (but certainly not excluding) what the ears tell the brain, what does it mean to have a favorite sound? When asked about favorite sounds, nearly every response was tied to an emotion, timbre, or feeling, not a frequency or volume. For Casey, his favorite musical sounds come from instruments that “feel good” not necessarily those that “sound good.” Pat's favorite sounds are “rich” “dark” and “full.” Barbara's hearing ability has changed from low frequency perception to mainly high frequency perception with her cochlear implant, but her favorite sounds are those that she considers, “quiet and soothing,” a description of how she feels she was able to hear before her hearing loss in 2000.

While the Oxford English Dictionary defines music as “the art or science of combining vocal or instrumental sounds to produce beauty of form, harmony, melody, rhythm, expressive content, etc...,”⁵ musicians appear to go well beyond this sound-based definition. Rhythm, a frequency-independent component of music, is highly significant to many of the subjects. As mentioned above, Frank is always thinking in rhythms, by choice or otherwise. Casey associates the upper registers of the piano with the impulses that come through his fingers. Evelyn Glennie’s descriptions of hearing as touch combined with the fact she is a professional percussionist highlight how important non-tonal input is for her. Rhythm, then, seems independent from ear-based hearing. In fact, studies have indicated that hearing impaired children are able to perform as well or better than their non-disabled peers in the areas of beat identification, tempo change, meter discrimination, and rhythm pattern maintenance.⁶ This suggests rhythm doesn’t necessarily enter one’s body through the ears; when ear-based hearing is diminished, the parts of the body that perceive rhythm might in fact be enhanced. Music is thus quantitatively shown to be more than ear-based input to the brain.

⁵ “Music, *n.* and *a.*” Oxford English Dictionary Online. Oxford University Press. April 14, 2006. <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00305575?query_type=word&queryword=music>.

⁶ Darrow, A. A. (1983). “A comparison of rhythmic responsiveness in normal and hearing impaired children and an investigation of the relationship of rhythmic responsiveness to the suprasegmental aspects of speech perception.” *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 44-09(A), 2702.

Performing

Performance is an important aspect of being a musician; it is how one shares what he or she produces. Performance, however, doesn't necessarily imply having an audience. If a musician strives to create a certain image and is finally able to do so solitarily, realizing this and being happy about it is a performance in one sense. Performance is defined as, "The accomplishment or carrying out of something commanded or undertaken; the doing of an action or operation."⁷ Subjects were asked about how they prepare for a performance and what they strive to do in performing. Frank explains, "... in preparing a piece to play at any event, my biggest job is to create an emotional picture based on what has been written, which would be different from anyone else's." Pat says, "...if I am doing a solo piece, there is usually a distinct message that the composer is trying to convey, I don't usually abstract it past that. In orchestral playing, like a Wagner solo, I think people try to convey a mood..." Alex tries to convey, "...an emotion, I guess. I want them to feel how I feel when I wrote the song. Or if it's someone else's song I try to imagine how they were feeling when they wrote the song and convey that." None of these descriptions mention a sound that the performer wants to have the audience experience. Hearing ability is then separate from what some musicians want to convey in performance; imagery, emotion and intent overshadow any particular combination of frequencies.

⁷ "Performance, n." Oxford English Dictionary Online. Oxford University Press. April 14, 2006. <http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/00305575?query_type=word&queryword=performance>.

Perception of Different Hearing Abilities

This study asked subjects several questions about how they understand musicians with different hearing abilities might approach music. Hearing musicians were asked if they could imagine music with a cochlear implant or as a profoundly deaf individual. Hearing impaired subjects were asked how their music might change if they had “normal” hearing. Pat supposes that if he lost aspects of his hearing he would try to focus more on vibration and touch. This correlates well with how the hearing impaired subjects describe what their brain receives as music. Frank supposes he wouldn’t be able to interact with music at all. “I’d probably turn my back on it.” He explains, “I would go to something mechanical, because if my eyes still existed, I could go upstairs and start putting instruments together, like I can do now.” In fact, for Frank he would rather lose his ability to move than his ability to hear. Pat connects hearing with group interaction and supposes he couldn’t continue playing music if he lost his hearing because, “... I don’t understand how [I] could play with a group sort of, you know?” While Casey greatly appreciates the hearing ability he currently has, he says he would give anything to be able to hear a Mozart flute concerto.

As might be supposed, it is hard for musicians to imagine themselves making music if they interact with sound in a significantly different way than they currently do. There is very little understanding among hearing subjects of what it would be like to hear through a cochlear implant. Likewise, Casey doesn’t have an auditory memory of sounds above 1000 Hz. This is one of the principal reasons this study

was undertaken; to help musicians understand how music can be understood and produced with different hearing abilities.

There is an important disjunction between what is explained by subjects above and what has been observed in their lives, what actually happens when a musician's hearing ability is compromised. While many of the hearing subjects predict they would turn their back on music or not be able to comprehend how they would interact with it if their hearing ability was compromised, those subjects who have already made this transition are proof that music survives changes in hearing ability. Musicians value music regardless of perception ability and often meet hearing difficulties with new ways of perceiving music. The reader should be encouraged and understand that music is not just sound; losing all or part of one's hearing does not preclude music leaving one's life.

Final Thoughts

This study, by no means, attempts to draw conclusions about how all musicians perceive music. However, from the small sampling of diverse subjects interviewed, important conclusions about the range of music perception can be made. Musical ability, musical creativity, the presence of music in one's life, musical tastes and self-perceived hearing ability are all independent of ear-based hearing. While it is highly likely that there are ways of perceiving music far beyond any discussed in this study, the author hopes to convey the breadth of perceptive possibilities to the reader. If a musician reads this study and becomes more aware of the connection between touch and sound, using that knowledge to experience a musical performance in a new way warrants the purpose of this study a success. The author hopes that this study will be a springboard to encourage musicians to explore areas of their passion they haven't previously encountered.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions

Perception Neutral (Questions posed to all interviewees)

What is your earliest memory of music?

Why did you choose to play the [insert instrument here]?

Is there anything special about your instrument that complements who you are?

Who are your musical influences? What have you taken from them?

What are some of your favorite pieces and why? Your dislikes?

How would you imagine your life without music?

When you experience other musicians performing, what do you concentrate on?

When you perform, what are you trying to convey to the audience?

How do you prepare for a performance?

How does music affect your life beyond performing?

What is the best musical experience you've ever had? The worst?

Is music ever able to convey an idea better than words? Why?

What is your definition of music?

What is music, beyond sound?

Why do you consider yourself a musician?

Where would you place yourself on this continuum and why:

Hearing
1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----8
Deaf

What is the most important question I haven't asked?

Questions for Hearing Musicians

What is your favorite instrument?

What is your favorite musical sound?

What is your favorite genre of music?

When you hear a symphony, what catches your attention the most?

Are you more of a rhythm or melody listener? Is this a fair question?

What do you like about music beyond what comes through your ears?

What's the first thing that comes to mind you hear the word music?

Besides one's ears, where/how else does music interact with the human body?

What do you think it would be like to experience music through a cochlear implant?

If you became deaf, describe what you think would happen with music in your life.

How do you think deaf musicians approach music?

Would becoming deaf or needing a cochlear implant stop you from being a musician?

Do you whistle or hum to yourself?

Do you ever compose?

My career, like that of Beethoven's and a number of others, is an impossibility. There are only three possible explanations: I am not a musician, I'm not deaf, or the general understanding of the categories of "Deaf" or "Music" must be incorrect.

-Evelyn Glennie

What do you think of Evelyn Glennie's quote?

Questions for Cochlear Implant Musicians

When did you get your cochlear implant?

What is the first piece of music you remember listening to through your implant?
What did it sound like?

Can you discuss what role music played in your life growing up?

How did your musical tastes change, if at all, when you got your implant?

How do people respond to the idea of mixing music and cochlear implants?

Are there difficulties in experiencing music through an implant?

Do you encounter any biases and stereotypes as a musician with a cochlear implant?
Would you be comfortable discussing them?

Are there musical advantages to having an implant?

When you listen to music, what do you focus on?

How is listening to music different than background noise or speech?

Were you musically active before you were implanted?

Can you experience music without your implant?

Do different speech maps improve your ability to perceive music? Enjoy music?

Besides one's ears, where else does music interact with the human body?

Are pitch and melody experienced differently through an implant?

Do you differentiate yourself from hearing musicians?

In what language do you primarily communicate?

Were you raised in a hearing or deaf household?

If you go to a sporting event, say a football game, do you enjoy the marching band?

Do you whistle or hum to yourself?

Do you sing during prayer?

What adjectives describe how music generally sounds to you through your implant?

Can you differentiate specific instruments if more than one is playing at once?

Do you ever compose?

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

The following subject interviews were conducted in a one-on-one verbal conversation unless otherwise noted. Capital letters indicate dialogue from the author.

Subject 1

“Casey”

Sunday, April 2, 2006

I READ [the text] THAT YOU JUST GAVE ME AND THERE IS TONS OF STUFF THAT I WANT TO TALK ABOUT. I'M TRYING TO GET AN IDEA OF WHERE TO START. FROM WHAT YOU WROTE THERE IS A REALLY INTERESTING PROGRESSION BETWEEN HEARING AND SIGHT AND TOUCH AND YOU MENTION THAT YOU INTERACT WITH THINGS BEST VISUALLY.

Yes.

IN TERMS OF READING INFORMATION. AND YOU MENTION MUSIC. READING MUSIC IS THE BEST WAY FOR MUSIC TO COME INTO YOUR BRAIN. BUT YOU THEN MENTION THAT ONCE YOU'VE LEARNED A PIECE YOU CAN CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LOSE THE VISUAL AND IT'S ALL BY TOUCH. I WAS WONDERING IF THERE IS A CONNECTION BETWEEN YOUR TRANSITION TO TOUCH AND HOW YOU LISTEN TO YOURSELF PLAY. ARE YOU LISTENING TO YOURSELF LESS OR MORE WHEN YOUR EYES ARE CLOSED OR ARE YOU FOCUSING ON YOUR FINGERS, OR HOW DOES THAT WORK?

I definitely listen more when my eyes are closed because I don't have the visual data... I don't think it's so much a visual touch thing as it is I see music and hear music, not just as sound, but as sense of space. Where are my hands in space when I'm playing... and so I can take that data either visually by saying “Oh my fingers are here” or I can do it by feel.

SO IT IS VERY SPECIFIC WITH THE PIANO?

Yeah.

YOU MENTION THAT YOU PLAYED THE CELLO. DO YOU REMEMBER THAT WELL ENOUGH, YOU PLAYED IT THROUGH MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL, TO TALK ABOUT HOW THAT WAS A SENSE OF A SPACE IN TERMS OF WHERE YOUR HANDS GO WITH THE CELLO?

Yeah.

WAS THERE A DIFFERENT FEELING BECAUSE THE INSTRUMENT WAS TOUCHING YOUR BODY IN A DIFFERENT WAY?

There is a different feeling because your hands make different shapes in the air when you're playing. And I am much, much more comfortable playing the piano than any other instrument because I have played it for so long. So I have gotten a handle on where my hands are. But, as with the cello, it is not just what I'm playing but where am I when I am playing, where are my hands.

I LIKE THIS SPACE THING.

I think it's kind of like what dancers do in terms of the sense of where they are except that instead of dancing I'm playing.

WHAT WAS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF MUSIC? YOU MENTION THIS PIANO OF YOUR AUNT'S...

It's actually one of my first memories... going to daycare. And I think this is before when I lost my hearing... it was going to day care in the car with my dad and we would sing *Zippidy Do Dab*. And that is both my first memory and my first memory of music.

AND YOU SAID YOU LOST YOUR HEARING WHEN YOU WERE 2?

Yeah. But they didn't find out until I was almost five.

BUT YOU SAID YOU STARTED PLAYING PIANO WHEN YOU WERE 4?

Sort of. "Playing" piano. One of our family friends was trying to get rid of his electric organ, so we took it and put it in the basement and my aunt would play and pretty simple things just chords and the melody with the right hand and I would sit next to her and while she'd play I'd play the tunes. And so my mom realized that I was doing this and she asked my aunt if she had been teaching me... no... "maybe she should take lessons"

WHO ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES? YOU MENTION BEETHOVEN, BUT ARE THERE PEOPLE THAT ARE ALIVE TODAY THAT YOU LOOK TO OR RELATE TO AT ALL IN TERMS OF HOW YOU PERCEIVE MUSIC?

Um, my second piano teacher, Mrs. B., has been the biggest musical influence on me. I started taking lessons with her when I was 8, if I remember this right, and I stopped when I was 14 when I went to High School because I lived away from home then. So when I started taking piano lessons with her I was still playing very mechanically. It was sort of like an exercise: "my hands go here and they press these buttons" it was kind of like typing. Then she actually me listen to the music instead of it just being mechanically where my hands were in space, it was what kind of sound is this position in your hands give you.

DO YOU REMEMBER GETTING MORE OUT OF IT OR LESS OUT OF IT OR CHANGING HOW YOU THOUGHT ABOUT MUSIC WHEN YOU

TRANSITIONED FROM MECHANICAL TO REALIZING WHAT KIND OF SOUND YOU WERE GETTING?

It was a very, very slow and gradual thing and I actually didn't really realize it until a couple years ago when I got to college. So, I took classical piano lessons, so "here's music and you have to play exactly these notes" so I could do it mechanically and do fine and then if you add the musicality it becomes a lot more fun and better, but you are still doing the notes that are told to you. And it wasn't until I got to college that I started fooling around with music in general with the piano and that's when I realized that back when I was little and I was taking lessons with Mrs. B. that was the part that was important, not the press buttons/feel thing. You could have a lot more fun with it than that. So it changed the way I was able to perceive music in the future, even if it didn't come out very much back then.

WHAT ARE YOUR FAVORITE PIECES?

They are all Beethoven. The first and third movements of the Moonlight Sonata and the first and second movements of the Sonata Pathetique and they are my favorite to play and to listen to and whenever I am depressed or angry or I don't want to think about things.

WHAT ROLE DOES MUSIC PLAY IN YOUR LIFE BEYOND JUST PLAYING IT? IS IT JUST AN EMOTIONAL THING? HOW DOES IT RELATE TO YOU... BEYOND JUST PERFORMING JUST FOR THE SAKE OF PERFORMING?

I really don't like performing. It's sort of something I kind of have to do so it's something that I do when I have emotions that I have to get out and I'm not sure how to verbalize them. Like some people go for a long run when they are worked up, I'll go on a long string playing the piano. It's also a way for me to connect with and interact with other people. And when I am playing piano and my friends are playing other instruments it's a way for me to interact with them without talking to them. It makes me have a part, like I belong in that part of the world. It gives me a role to play.

HAVE YOU EVER PLAYED WITH SOMEONE YOU COULDN'T HEAR?

When... very often, yeah. When I'm playing with singers it's really easy for the piano sound to drown out the singers because we carry the lower part of the bass and have the chords and they have the melody. I can still hear them, but I have to really strain to hear them so when I'm playing with singers, it's kind of like playing by intuition and by sight and knowing the way the song is going "here's the melody" and I'm more on my own.

DO YOU EVER PLAY WITH INSTRUMENTS THAT ARE LOWER THAN YOURS?

No. Although, one thing that happens when I play with people I can't hear, well it's not like I can't not hear them, it's just really hard for me to hear them. I can't hear mistakes so I'll play things and I can only hear when I am making a mistake and at the end I'll be like "that was awesome" and they will be like "no, I made a mistake here and here and here..." "No you didn't." "Yes I did." So I have no feedback from that.

CAN YOU DESCRIBE AS THE PITCH GETS CLOSER TO THE TRANSITION POINT WHERE YOU CAN'T HEAR ANYMORE ON THE PIANO, TWO OCTAVES ABOVE MIDDLE C, IS IT SILENCE OR UNRECOGNIZABLE? DOES YOUR BRAIN GET ANYTHING FROM YOUR EARS?

Two octaves above middle c is where the clicking of the piano keys is loud enough to drown out the actual sound of the note being played. As it approaches there, the clicking gets louder and louder and louder and the note gets softer and softer and softer.

SO WHEN YOU ARE PLAYING UP AT THE TOP OF THE PIANO YOU ARE HEARING JUST THE CLICKING OF THE KEYS?

Yeah. It's all percussive and I think that's the reason why I was playing the piano like a typewriter when I was 8. It was a typewriter.

EVELYN GLENNIE IS ABLE TO HEAR THINGS AND TUNE THEM THROUGH DIFFERENT PARTS OF HER BODY... [EXPLAINS EVELYN GLENNIE'S HEARING ABILITIES] DOES THAT RING A BELL TO YOU AT ALL?

Oh yeah. Oh yeah.

WHEN YOU SAY YOU CAN'T HEAR ABOVE 2 OCTAVES ABOVE MIDDLE C CAN YOU TELL A DIFFERENCE IN PITCH OR, CAN YOU FEEL IT?

Not when I'm playing the piano because I think ... I think the phenomenon you are referring to is how different parts of your body act as resonant bodies... I'm a geek...

NO I THINK OF THAT TOO.

So when I'm playing the piano I think the sound is loud enough and the mechanical impulse is great enough from the keys and in my fingers, are strong enough to drown anything else that will come out. But when I listen to orchestra music, like when I was little we had these big old speakers that were almost as big as me when I was curled up, so when I would go there and I would turn up the bass and the volume and just sit there and lean against the speakers because I could feel it echoing in different parts of me.

IF YOU TOOK THOSE PIECES THAT YOU DID THAT WITH, AND NOW HAD THE MUSIC, COULD YOU CORRELATE WHAT YOU WERE FEELING TO SPECIFIC NOTES? OR IS IT JUST KIND OF A FEELING OF THE LOW NOTES AND YOU CAN'T TELL THE NOTES. WHAT IS THE RESOLUTION?

I definitely can't feel specific notes. It's more like a continuous thing rather than a discrete thing I can't point out here is this exact frequency, but it's more like if you gave me a piece of paper and told me to draw a line where you think the note is, I would be able to do that.

WHAT ABOUT HIGH FREQUENCIES?

Um, much lower resolution on that one, but same thing; a blurry line of where I think the notes are until it gets out of my hearing range. And just crossing lines like "flute goes here."

BUT DO YOU FEEL ANYTHING APART FROM YOUR EARS IN THE SOUND RANGE THAT YOU CAN'T HEAR?

No.

I REALLY LIKED YOUR PHRASE "I THINK MY HEARING MAKES ME MORE TOLERANT OF BAD SOUNDING INSTRUMENTS AND LESS TOLERANT OF BAD FEELING ONES" AND THAT KIND OF GOES ALONG WITH WHAT WE ARE TALKING ABOUT HERE WITH THE CORRELATION BETWEEN THIS HEARING THING AND FEELING THING. CAN YOU GIVE SOME EXAMPLES OF BAD FEELING INSTRUMENTS?

Bad guitars. So one of my suitemates he has a bass and I was playing around with it one day and a couple of them walked in and they went "oh, oh man, that sounds awful, there is this buzzing noise and it's kind of broken..." and I just went "MEH!" Because it still felt good. For Christmas one year I got a guitar that sounded pretty good according to the rest of my family, but I didn't like it because it didn't feel proper. Like the place where I was putting my fingers was a little bit off and the way it felt when I plucked the strings was a little bit off and I couldn't stand that.

SO IT WAS THE RESONANCE OF THE GUITAR BODY ON YOUR BODY THAT YOU WERE FEELING MORE THAN HEARING?

I think it was more the pressure on my fingers or when I'm playing piano in department stores and things some of them have this really chalky or spongy feeling in their keys and that is the first thing that I notice... the keys just don't feel right and that usually corresponds to it not sounding very good... but like when I play the piano it has got to feel a certain way or I just can't stand it. Which is probably why I've had old broken instruments most of my life.

BECAUSE IT'S NOT THE SOUND THAT'S IMPORTANT?

Not the sound... my current piano, it's a trashy piano, I got it for free, it sounds terrible, it's out of tune, but it's old and it's sort of broken in so it just feels good when you play it.

WHAT IS THE BEST MUSICAL EXPERIENCE YOU'VE EVER HAD?

That's a tough one...

OR JUST SOME GOOD ONES THAT COME TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK OF GOOD MUSICAL MEMORIES.

When I started playing the four pieces I mentioned that I play when I'm mad at the world, when I started doing that, when I did that for the first time when I was probably 12 or 13, and I had gotten to the point where I could play all four of those pieces and I did that for the first time and it was the first time that I had sort of kind of let myself loose on the piano and it was the first time I let myself resign to the piano instead of just playing because the notes said just play here. And so the first couple times I did that it was like "oh wow! I have a release valve. I've never had one before" and then the first time I went to see an orchestra concert, I think I was in sixth grade and we were at the back of the big hall and you couldn't see the instruments and you couldn't see the instruments, but it was the first time that I had ever been to a real honest-to-god orchestra concert and that was a big thing because before I had only listened to recordings, and I loved them, but they were still recordings and then when I saw the orchestra, and so there was such a space then I could see these people were sitting here and these people were moving here and the sound was coming from there then sort of random stereo speakers.

YOU ALREADY TOUCHED UPON THE IDEA THAT MUSIC IS SOMETIMES BETTER ABLE TO CONVEY IDEAS THAN WORDS, SPECIFICALLY FEELINGS WHEN YOU WERE UNABLE TO VERBALIZE EMOTIONS, ARE THERE ANY OTHER EXPERIENCES WHERE MUSIC IS ABLE TO BETTER EXPRESS YOUR FEELINGS?

Well definitely the anger, and sadness. I actually have a harder time doing that with happy pieces. It's easier for me to play the depressing pieces than the happy ones.

ARE HAPPY EMOTIONS EVER ABLE TO BE CONVEYED THROUGH NOT SO HAPPY MUSIC?

Yeah! I'd say so! And my four favorite pieces, they definitely change when I'm in a different mood. Sometimes they feel great when I'm playing them and they are really depressing pieces and sometimes they sound happy.

[1-8 CONTINUUM QUESTION]

Well I'll give you a couple different kinds of answers in terms of just which frequencies, I put myself at a 5. In terms of just society I interact with, I'm all the way over at 1. And in terms of how I perceive myself and maybe how others

perceive me, maybe a 1.5. where it's most of the time I'm just like everyone else and then just suddenly notice it because someone will whisper something and I just won't catch it or there will be a beep and everyone will turn around but me. So it's like hearing without some of the hearing parts.

IF YOU COULD DIFFERENTIATE LISTENING INTO RHYTHM VS. MELODY WHICH ONE OF THOSE CATCHES YOUR ATTENTION MORE?

Rhythm [quickly].

WHY?

Because I can feel the rhythm, because the melody depends on the rhythm and the frequency and the rhythm is just one thing all the time. This impulse all the time. And it has to do with the lower and more percussive parts like percussion and low parts are linked together in my mind. The low sounds are the ones I can hear so I can hear drums.

WHAT IS THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT MUSIC?

My hands moving on the piano.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE TO EXPERIENCE MUSIC THROUGH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

They actually, when I was at the end of elementary school, my parents were pretty not happy about me having hearing loss, they always wanted to fix that, they asked me if I wanted to get a cochlear implant, and I don't know if it's changed since then, but then I did some research and they say the difference in the sound is kind of like the difference between hearing a piano live and hearing a piano through a recording, at least that's the way I visualized it when I was 10. And I think that's what it would sound like. Like everything was recorded. And that is also what it sounded like through my hearing aid and that's why I hated my hearing aids and I thought having cochlear implants would be like having hearing aids all the time and so I told them no.. I would rather not hear everything and hear the things that I can hear sounding good than be able to hear everything but have it be through this filter. I wouldn't want that.

IF YOU BECAME PROFOUNDLY DEAF, WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD HAPPEN TO MUSIC IN YOUR LIFE?

Um... well if I stuck with still having some of the low frequencies, I might just switch to playing the bass. I would play the instruments within my hearing range. I would still play. I would miss it a lot, being able to hear the higher ones and I would still have that spatial sense of music, but it wouldn't be tied to the sound anymore, maybe I'd imagine it. I'm probably not that good. But it would definitely take a big chunk out of it.

BUT SOMEONE LIKE EVELYN GLENNIE, HOW DO YOU IMAGINE THAT SHE PERCEIVES MUSIC?

What instrument?

PERCUSSION.

My best guess is it would probably feel like when I am not playing keyboard with the power turned off. It's like the rhythm and it's like the shockwaves coming through your arms and it's a sense of where your arms are in space and music becomes a lot more like dancing. And you can dance to music because it sort of adds it, music and dance go together and if you filter out the music it still feels pretty good.

DO YOU EVER WHISTLE OR HUM TO YOURSELF?

Yes, not whistle, I can't hear whistles, but hum, yeah.

WITH PRAYER?

I was raised Catholic, so I'd say about a quarter of the things I hum are sounds from church or religious-ish pieces

WHAT DOES THE CHURCH ORGAN MEAN TO YOU?

I actually think of the organ in terms of the Bach concerto in D. So it's more of a musical instrument and less of a God thing.

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN IN A CATHEDRAL WITH ALL THE STOPS OUT?

No, but I have been in a cathedral with a choir. I've always wanted to, but all the church organs I've seen are those little electric organs off to the side... someday.

GLENNIE QUOTE

I big thumbs up first of all, because, the first thing is there seem to be those people that think although I don't believe it, that music is hearing and if you can't hear, you can't possibly get as much out of music, not that you are less intelligent, it's that you just don't have the sense that you need to perceive it. And I think that that misses the idea that music isn't just sound and that's the part that she picks up on, that I pick up on, that other musicians with hearing problems pick up on, music isn't just the sound.

YOU WANT TO HEAR A MOZART FLUTE CONCERTO SOMEDAY, WHAT SORT OF RISK ARE YOU WILLING TO TAKE TO DO THAT? IF THERE WAS A TECHNOLOGY SOMEDAY IN THE FUTURE THAT WOULD ENABLE YOU TO DO THAT, BUT THERE WAS RISK X THAT YOU WOULD LOSE ALL OF YOUR HEARING, WHAT SORT OF IMPORTANCE DO YOU

PLACE ON THIS UNREALIZED POSSIBILITY OF HEARING MORE THAN YOU CAN?

Not all that much in terms of risks I'm willing to take. If it's something that is a newfangled piece of tech, that is non-permanent and totally reversible, I would totally just pay out the nose for it. Now when \$2000 is a lot of money, I would scrape together all the \$2000 I had made in my life and pay it so I could hear the Mozart flute concerto. But even if it cost \$1, if there was a risk that I would lose what I've got right now, I wouldn't take it.

WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION I HAVEN'T ASKED?

There is this thing about what music means to me and how I perceive it and what I do with it, I don't just ask what other people who are hearing think what it means to me and how I perceive it, and it's like what they think I think about music and what I actually think about music. There's not a huge divide, but a pretty significant one. The first and most blatantly obvious one is music is sound and if you can't hear sound that limits your ability to participate in music, and I think a lot of people have that as their first perception, and that is very false for me. And the second one is the triumph over obstacles thing. Uh... like when people say "ohmygosh, you play music and you can't hear... ahhh!" and I hate that, and that implies the first one: music is dependent on hearing. And that's such a big deal that I've "triumphed" over obstacles. And it's not a triumph over obstacles at all. Not really. So those two things kind of to outside people it's a feeling of special-ness or significance and that I can play piano is more significant than someone with normal hearing playing the piano. And to me it's just not at all.

WHY DO YOU THINK I ASKED TO YOU BE IN THIS STUDY?

Because I play music and I have hearing loss?

THIS IDEA OF TRIUMPH OVER AN OBSTACLE, YOU MENTION IN YOUR COMMENTS, TRYING TO GET YOU INVOLVED WITH THE DEAF COMMUNITY, CAN YOU TALK ABOUT WHAT THAT WAS LIKE IN YOUR LIFE IN TERMS OF HOW YOU FELT ABOUT YOURSELF AND IF MUSIC PLAYED INTO THAT AT ALL?

So, they found out that I had a hearing problem right before I got into kindergarten, so I got all this special stuff, I had a sign language aid, I had an FM transmitter, I had a hearing aid, and I think they wanted to boost my self esteem "It's OK that you have a hearing problem, it doesn't mean that you are any different than everyone else" and I had the roll eyes thing and I wanted them to stop saying it. It was a completely normal part of my life and the thing with the mainstream deaf community is that I was perceived as an outsider, is that there is this sense of special-ness, that deafness makes you special and different, and yeah it is, but it doesn't make you any different than if you had this color hair or you were this tall. And so with music, I sort of thought that when people were like, "oh it's so special that you play the piano and that you have a hearing loss" I felt that that was trying to pound me into that

part of deaf culture that I really didn't like. This is a big deal, this is different, this isn't like everyone else.

DO YOU REMEMBER A TRANSITION IN YOUR SELF PERCEPTION WHEN YOU REALIZED THAT THIS PART OF YOUR LIFE WAS DIFFERENT? IS THIS A FAIR QUESTION?

Answer of a 5 y.o. through a 19 y.o. I thought it was the coolest thing in the world. Like a scientific oddity, I could play with this, I was sort of happy about it. And I would poke around on the piano and I would try to hear this and that and say "I can hear this and I can't hear that" A couple months later when I entered school I found out that it wasn't a fun thing to play with. What was for me a game that was a normal part of my life became to all the grownups that I'd interacted with, this tremendous deal. And that changed my perception of this completely. They thought it would have a tremendous impact on my life and I started believing them. I started hearing that and not wanting it to be that way and finding ways to actively combat that. So when I entered kindergarten, there was this shift with me and hearing and music. It changed from being a game that didn't mean anything to being something that had tremendously high stakes. How could I make it not impressive to them?

THE FEELINGS THAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT, DID THEY CHANGE AT ALL WHEN YOU CAME TO [NAME OF COLLEGE]?

They changed when I went to HS and college, the last 7 years they've been changing. Yeah. Because when I was older and came here, the hearing wasn't such big deal, the hearing became what I wanted it to be, which was just an attribute of me. Not anything more important than any other attribute. It made me relax about it more. Right now when I play the piano with people I don't have something in the back of my mind "are they impressed because I play the piano?" I'm just playing the piano like everyone else plays the piano. I always had in the back of my mind, are they perceiving this in the way that I don't want them to think about it? It's like um, it seems like to them that when I am playing the piano I'm trying to prove something, but I thought that because they thought I thought I was trying to prove something, I became like I was trying to prove something. And I don't have that anymore, it's really nice.

HOW DOES IT FEEL DIFFERENT?

There isn't a voice in the back of your brain where you are worried about what other people think, you just it's just the music and you, not the paranoia.

ANYTHING ELSE?

In the notes when I talk about learning a high passage by bringing it down then putting it back up, all that is completely normal to me.

IF YOU ARE PLAYING SOMETHING THAT OTHER PEOPLE CAN HEAR THAT YOU CAN'T, DO YOU PAY ATTENTION TO HOW OTHER PEOPLE ARE LISTENING TO IT?

I do, there is definitely a difference between how I play down here and how I play up here, when I am playing notes that I can't hear I'm playing them more mechanically, it becomes a scientific/technical problem. When I'm playing notes that I can hear, it becomes more intuitive, I can put more musicality into it. And so when I'm playing stuff that I can't hear, I ask people to tell me when I'm playing wrong notes, like my mom. I'm also trying to be musical, but I don't have the feed back and I can have the feedback on whether I'm hitting the right notes, because my hands are in the right place at the right time, but not the musical feedback. That's harder to articulate to people who don't play music. So I pay attention to how hearing musicians hear the music I play that I can't hear, I don't pay as much attention to how everyone else hears the music that I can't hear. That's the feedback that I'm missing that I'm looking for.

WHAT SORTS OF FEEDBACK DO YOU GET FROM MUSICIANS WHEN THEY ARE LISTENING TO YOU PLAY WHEN YOU CAN'T HEAR IT?

Most people can't tell, I guess, people tell me my voice sounds like a deaf person's, or mannerisms I've had are like a deaf person's, but I've played the piano in front of a lot of people over the years and I've never been told that my playing sounds like a deaf person's. The lack of feedback there is one type of feedback.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!

Subject 2
"Frank"
Monday April 3, 2006

THE GOAL OF THIS CONVERSATION FOR ME... DO YOU HAVE A PRETTY GOOD GRASP OF WHAT THIS PROJECT IS?

Oh, well, I wouldn't say a pretty good grasp, but I have a general feeling for it, yea. So the more you can tell me, the better off we will be.

SO THE GOAL OF THIS PROJECT FOR ME IS CALLED THE ARTS AND HUMANITY CAPSTONE AND IT'S WHERE YOU TAKE SOMETHING THAT YOU HAVE SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE IN AND YOU BUILD UPON IT SO I'VE DONE RESEARCH IN THE PAST ON COCHLEAR IMPLANT PATIENTS IN TERMS OF IMPROVING THEIR SPEECH DISCRIMINATION ABILITIES; I'VE BEEN A MUSICIAN MOST OF MY LIFE, SO I KIND OF COMBINED THOSE TWO THINGS WHICH I HAVE EXPERIENCE WITH AND WANTED TO LOOK AT HOW PEOPLE'S ABILITY TO HEAR – UH, THAT WAS MY STARTING POINT: HOW PEOPLE'S ABILITY TO HEAR EFFECTS HOW THEY INTERACT WITH MUSIC. SO I'VE FURTHER DEVELOPED THAT INTO LOOKING AT PEOPLE'S PERCEPTIVE ABILITIES IN TERMS OF MUSIC AND WHAT THAT DOES WITH MUSIC IN THEIR LIFE AND HOW THEY INTERACT WITH MUSIC. I'M SPECIFICALLY TALKING TO MUSICIANS AND THE GOAL IS TO CREATE A DOCUMENT IN THE END WHERE I AM KIND OF SYNTHESIZING CASE STUDIES OF INTERVIEWS AND MAKING SOMETHING WHERE A MUSICIAN WITH A PARTICULAR ABILITY TO PERCEIVE MUSIC CAN READ THIS DOCUMENT AND GAIN NEW PERSPECTIVES THAT THEY AREN'T ABLE TO BY THEMSELVES. SO WHAT I WANTED TO KIND OF TAKE FROM YOU IS FIRST KIND OF YOUR MUSICAL BACKGROUND AND WHAT YOU'VE BEEN INVOLVED WITH IN YOUR LIFE. AND THEN WAYS THAT YOU PERCEIVE MUSIC – BOTH THROUGH YOUR EARS AND THROUGH YOUR HANDS, BODY, AND EMOTIONS AND THEN KIND OF WHAT WE TOUCH ON, KIND OF EXPAND THAT AND DEVELOP THAT. MAYBE YOU COULD TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT SOME OF YOUR EARLIEST MEMORIES OF MUSIC AND WALK ME THROUGH KIND OF A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF YOUR MUSICAL CAREER.

Well, this is hardly a memory because I was so young, but I was told by my parents that at age two and half or three that I was always drawn – there was no TV in those days – to the radio when the violin was played. And then as I became more knowledgeable and a little older, I expressed an interest in playing the violin and they wanted me to play the piano, but I wanted to play the violin. So uh, just about the age of six, I began the violin – so this was back in Minnesota, Minneapolis. And so I studied privately through my school years and through high school and then came a decision – I played recital and did things that kids do – actually, my school at one

instance had no orchestra, and so I played the tympani and snare drum and that kind of – which I found very interesting.

WAS MUSIC A PRIMARY FOCUS IN YOUR LIFE?

Well, I was more focused in it than anything else put together. I really looked forward to those things and sight singing was unusually there quite a thing in almost a solfege type thing in this MN high school – it's hard to hear of it anymore, but anyhow, I thought it was great fun. And so all those things just tied together are – if I look back at school say up to twelfth grade, uh I first of all see the musical part – always. And then I came to a point where my father wanted me to join in his business; he was a professional photographer and he was a very good one. And uh I had worked with him, just sort of helping out and knew the business and yet wanted to be a musician. And but this was the Midwest and music was essentially at that point on the east coast, and if not there, on the west coast, so I figured that I wasn't well enough developed to become comparative and I did go to the MN symphony on a regular basis and knew some people there peripherally but I could tell that I wasn't of a level to be in such a group at that point. So I took two years off and moved to MN (Minneapolis) with some friends and two years into it, I learned a concerto in a month for two years which brought me up to a level where I could successfully audition for conservatories and so on. And then I went to the Peabody conservatory in Baltimore.

WERE YOU TEACHING YOURSELF?

No, no, I was studying at a school with a very fine teacher, but prior to that – in college – I was starting piano essentially I was studying harmony and essentially violin so I mean my whole twelve hours a day was spent at the music school and uh, that was my life and I thrived on it. I really never really wanted to do anything else. So uh, then I got to Peabody and I spent five or more years there studying with a teacher with I had wanted to study with for quite a while and uh after that, it became time to get out there and make a living so I joined the Baltimore symphony for one year and hated it. And I still can't explain why I hated it because I really wanted to be in orchestras, but I didn't like that so I quit and I served as a freelancer around Baltimore for about three years and got really quite a few of them – the best opportunities that were sort of high on the list so that was good. But by this time, I sort of had a family, so I needed more. Well, my teacher at Peabody suggested that I go to Tanglewood to make contacts and there are conductors going through there all the time from Yorkshire and they listen and talk to people and it's just a good way to make contacts and in addition, I might even learn something. So I went to Tanglewood and at the end of Tanglewood, some of which was very exciting to me – I did a lot of solo playing and I was concert master of the student orchestra and that kind of thing...

WHEN YOU GO THERE AS A MUSICIAN, HOW DID YOU PRESENT YOURSELF OF GET YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR?

Well, auditions, yeah. But I was, I admit, I was helped because my teacher was a big help in recommending me and telling me and something and that stuff doesn't hurt. So anyhow, then at the end of Tanglewood, the assistant concert master of the Boston Symphony at that time – I had worked with him in chamber music over the summer and he and the concert master and a few others – they thought I should audition for the orchestra, and at that time, there were no openings, but they expected some the next summer – the next year. So the next year, I went there and by this time I had acquired a lot of friends who were very good violinists in Tanglewood and I kept in touch with them through the year. So came auditions next year and I went there and the auditions boiled down to four people and I was one of them. There were two openings. I was one of them. And uh, the first two were taken by my close friends, and I was number three. And the fourth, I don't even remember who it was. So I was both encouraged and discouraged by that. So then over time, I took more auditions and at one point, became so disillusioned that I said, "maybe I will join my father but then I thought, maybe one more time," and so I came in the middle of the winter to audition, maybe two or three years later, here and uh, that one did it.

WHAT, WHAT DREW YOU BACK TO THAT FINAL TIME?

Well I had never stopped playing and I was still in the music business, but not comfortably enough. And of the orchestras of choice in those days – they would be Chicago, Cleveland, New York, Boston and uh, my preference had always been the Boston Symphony from having heard records of all these orchestras and, and as I went to Tanglewood, I obviously made a connection with the orchestra so I was – it just became my focus. And so when I finally did get in, I had arranged auditions at three other orchestras in one week. Just to get this over with. And fortunately, I connected here.

WOW. AND...

So now, I've been here forty-one years.

RIGHT. YOU'RE... WHAT KEPT YOU PLAYING, BECAUSE YOU SAID MUSIC WAS YOUR THING, MUSIC IS WHAT YOU REMEMBER WHEN YOU LOOK BACK AT HIGH SCHOOL AND BEFORE THAT. WHAT ABOUT IT WAS...

Well, several things. For me, uh...first of all rhythm and different intricacies of rhythm – combinations of rhythm are very intriguing and I have always – since I was a little kid – I have always counted when I walk and I would count starting with my left leg and then with my right and then I would switch back and this was just part of me. I still do it. So I am always keeping track of the abstract numbers. So that was one thing – basically rhythm. Another thing was that I had a lot of records – my parents bought me a lot of records and I learned after a while that certain combinations of sounds, harmonies make me feel better than others and some would make – I would react emotionally

EMOTIONALLY?

I would be happy, I would be you know confused, I would be whatever depending on what the piece was. As years went by and I kept listening to these same records more and more I started to decide that now I am beginning to decide that that, there's that, and that, there's that, and so that sort of has always been my intrigue – sort of both rhythm and the actual sound – emotional value.

SO ONE OF MY QUESTIONS THAT I WAS GOING TO ASK LATER WAS: DO YOU CONSIDER YOURSELF A RHYTHMIC LISTENER OR A MELODIC LISTENER OR IS THIS EVEN A FAIR QUESTION AND DO YOU THINK YOU'VE ANSWERED THAT IN TERMS OF A RHYTHMIC LISTENER OR THAT THERE IS A NUANCE HERE THAT YOU...

I think it is a very close match. Uh, I am very – you've probably noticed it – taken; I have great importance with things being very organized – and that would be rhythmically, and then on top of that, you could build the colors of sound, but if there's just organization below that I don't think that will ever happen.

THAT WAS JUST WHAT I WAS GOING TO ASK: DO YOU THINK YOU CAN HAVE A MELODY WITH A DISORGANIZED RHYTHM.

Exactly.

UM, DO YOU REMEMBER OTHER THAN THIS LIKING TO LISTEN TO THE VIOLIN ON THE RADIO – WHAT OTHER ASPECTS OF THE INSTRUMENT INTRIGUED YOU?

Of the instrument itself?

AS OPPOSED TO OTHER INSTRUMENTS.

Well I didn't even know what a viola was until I was almost out of high school and cello, I knew about, but it didn't intrigue me, it didn't intrigue me. Uh, beyond that, I can't really explain it. The- a fellow who my father worked with in a place – in an organization in MN, uh, was during his off hours, a violin maker. And we became family friends and he would take me to his shop and I would become intrigued with all it takes to take a block of wood and turn it into a violin, basically. And he would just feed me a little bit more every time and I would just be terribly intrigued because there is sort of a parallel between rhythm and sound because you would take pieces and put them together and it would create something that didn't look like anything else – or anything it came from. And that is what sort of happened with rhythm and sound – he put them together to create something else.

COULD YOU TALK A LITTLE ABOUT HOW YOU EXPERIENCE RHYTHM AND SOUND? IS IT ALWAYS THROUGH YOUR EARS?

Oh no, no, I can be in the middle of a you know five o'clock traffic and walking and have my own rhythm in my mind so that...That – something is always going on in my mind that is distracting and I sort of get into a Muzac sort of thing when I run out of ideas and I just keep doing this loop, and it drives me nuts, but I can't get rid of it, but it is always there. When [my wife] hears me mumbling or doing something and I don't even realize that I'm doing it, but I'm not talking about anything, I'm just rolling this stuff back and forth in my mind.

WHAT ABOUT THE CLOCK OVER THERE? IT'S CONSTANT TICKING.

Does it interfere with what I think? No.

DO YOU NOTICE IT?

If I need to yeah.

BEYOND KIND OF DAILY LIFE, HOW DO YOU *LISTEN* TO A PIECE OF MUSIC; HOW DO YOU EXPERIENCE A SYMPHONIC RHYTHM OR A SYMPHONIC SOUND FIRST OF ALL FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A LISTENER?

Well, I have to say that it is very hard for me to be objective. I have analyzed so much music in my life so it what's I do. I am a very critical listener so I can't just simply sit back and let it wash over me. I really want the audience to do what when I play. I can't separate that, because I'm making it and they're receiving it and I don't receive well without analyzing.

DO YOU – WOULD YOU RATHER – WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE ABLE TO DO THAT?

No, I'm satisfied. I find it – the analysis part of it very intriguing and the point is, that I like this...maybe I can use it. I don't like that – now why don't I like that and why will I not use that and I eliminate that and this is the big advantage. I'm jumping ahead a little bit, excuse me, but the big advantage of sitting in a symphony orchestra because you have conductor after conductor and some do wonderful things and some do terrible things and some do both and you can sit there and if you pay attention, you can learn much more from what goes wrong than from what goes right.

WHEN DID YOU FEEL CONFIDENT, IF EVER, ABOUT DISAGREEING WITH A CONDUCTOR IN YOUR MIND? WAS THERE EVER A TRANSITION?

Well, I was in a symphony and I didn't like it at all. I thought it was a farce. Because I had been going – involved there in the concerts before I ran the orchestra- the concerts I would go to would be orchestra would be from the Philadelphia orchestra or the New York orchestra and this is a very high level. And here I sat down at the Baltimore symphony and I was scandalized and I couldn't wait to get out. Because of

the disorganization and the conductor was a complete farce in my mind and that's probably when I became so pointedly critical in my mind.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF WHAT YOUR LIFE WOULD BE LIKE WITHOUT MUSIC?

I would be gone. Uh, I spent my teenage years from the time I was about eleven to the time I was nearly seventeen – probably 60% in hospitals and the rest of the time trying to catch up and uh, that is a lot of time for a kid that age to be alone. I wasn't even in my town. My family lived near South Dakota and I was in MN. So I had a little radio and the radio would get the university station there and I could listen to good music. And whenever I was really down, I would listen to that and I tried to socialize and that kind of thing, but I had no normal adolescent as far as dealing with other people so I gravitated towards music. So when I finally didn't have to be at the hospital anymore, it just seemed very clear that this was the only path.

WHO ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

Well certainly my early teachers in limited ways. I had my beginning teacher who just last year past away at the age of 100 and then her teacher I studied with. He was much more advanced and developed. And I was fortunate enough to go on to the teachers at Peabody, who was really at a high artistic level and very demanding. And he liked women much better than men and it made it difficult for me to please him and it made me work that much harder. And so those were for a violinist, I was striving to please somebody else and myself – you know – those school type of situations. And in terms of opportunities to play, I have always been very fortunate, except for auditions – but opportunities to play – to do interesting things, just come and very seldom have to seek something out. But I think probably it's because I am always so intensely critical of myself and trying to make myself better so that when I look up from my self-blinding circumstances, I can see that well, maybe I will match up.

DO YOU HAVE ANY FAVORITE PIECES? GENRES?

Well, pieces, I don't know about pieces. I've always said that my greatest influences should have something with Brahms on it. I think he would be my all time favorite composer and if I were to analyze the whole thing, in some respects, he's absolutely impeccable and in some, he's not, but the combination, it really works for me.

YOU EXPLAINED THAT YOU ARE NOT AN IDEAL LISTENER BECAUSE YOU ARE ALWAYS CRITIQUING. CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF IF YOU HEARD A PIECE OF MUSIC ON THE RADIO AND JOE ANONYMOUS WAS SITTING NEXT TO YOU – NON MUSICAL – JUST KIND OF LISTENING TO THE SOUND AND RECEIVING THE EMOTIONS. HOW WOULD YOU BE REACTING TO IT IN YOUR MIND AND WHAT GOES ON IN YOUR MIND WHEN YOU FIRST HEAR SOMETHING?

Well, firstly, recognition of the piece and the next thing is the choice of tempi and the choice and the nuance of all these sorts of things that go into it and my own ear of disagreement or agreement of that. But you know, things could be different from what – wherever my standard is, and I could still appreciate them, but beyond a certain point, I can't. I'm not just glued to one standard, so I like to keep some flexibility to my approach to how I listen and how I produce music.

IS THERE A PARTICULAR PLACE IN WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT FIRST OR LAST WHEN IT COMES TO INTONATION? LIKE IF A VIOLINIST IS PLAYING A PIECE A LITTLE BIT OUT OF TUNE OR IN A MUSICAL STYLE YOU DON'T QUITE AGREE WITH, LIKE IF THE TEMPO IS TOO SLOW, WOULD YOU ALWAYS NOTICE THE TEMPO FIRST OR THE INTONATION FIRST?

No, the pitch.

WHEN YOU PERFORM – SINCE WE HAVEN'T TALKED ABOUT YOUR CONDUCTING YET – AS A VIOLINIST WHEN YOU PERFORM, HOW DO YOU SET YOURSELF UP FOR IT AND WHAT ARE YOU PREPARING FOR. WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO GET ACROSS THE AUDIENCE? WHAT IS YOUR GOAL? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE THE IDEAL AUDIENCE MEMBER TO COME OUT FEELING?

Well, uh, emotions are very hard to explain. A well written or decently written piece of music travels a certain arch, accomplishes certain things and creates contrasts to draw your attention to something later and then some kind of finale. So um, if I don't have a clear picture that obviously is my own, I will just be playing mechanically. So in preparing a piece to place at any event uh, my biggest job is to create an emotional picture based on what has been written, which would be different from anyone else's.

AND IF SOMEONE COMES AWAY FROM THE PERFORMANCE WITH A TOTALLY DIFFERENT PICTURE FROM WHAT YOU WERE TRYING TO PRESENT – HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT?

That's fine. Someone will say, you played beautifully, but this was too slow, or too quick – so fine, you play at your tempo. I don't begrudge that at all. We are all so different – there is no way that we can totally satisfy anybody.

WHAT'S THE BEST MUSICAL EXPERIENCE YOU'VE EVER HAD?

I think probably Isabel Castro as a player and not because of my playing, although my playing was a successful part of it. But two conductors in my life have really influenced me more than anybody else. The first is Claudio – he is now nearly retired. He was a marvelous young pianist. He is from Italy and was a well known piano trio as a young fellow – met him at Tanglewood. He was a conducting student and I was his concert master and the high point of that was that I played a concerto and he conducted me and it was at that level, a great success from all points of view. And we personally got along very well – and we'd talk about how would you phrase this and

how would you phrase that and there was a connection even though there was difference; there is always a way to relate. Then he came back as a fully professional conductor a couple of times for the BSO and he – one of the high points of my life was when he did the Mahler 2nd with the BSO and people downtown are still talking about it. And the other conductor would be Bernard Haitink – Claudio is of the younger, but still not young European school and Haitink was of the elder, more traditional, you know, going back almost to Mahler's time of thinking about music – both Claudio and Haitink are both self-effacing both on and off the stage, and they can say what they need to say without having to really create a ruckus. They just do it because it's so deeply seeded in them that it just has to get to you.

WHAT ABOUT THE WORST?

The one I told you about in Baltimore, his name was Massimo, he was awful – there were a lot of worst things – many more of them. Actually Claudio's nephew is terrible.

IS MUSIC EVER ABLE TO CONVEY AN IDEA BETTER THAN WORDS?

Better than words? Oh, always. If you ask me a question, I'm not going to sing, but in my mind, intellectually, if a situation or problem arises, I can probably relate it to a piece of music, where I can satisfy that need.

HOW DO YOU ORGANIZE THE MUSIC IN YOUR BRAIN? YOU SEEM TO HAVE AN EXCELLENT ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE VERY SPECIFIC THINGS. IS THERE ANY WAY YOU CATEGORIZE THINGS?

That's just my area. You or anyone else has a direction you're interested in and the more you gather, the more you have to do something with it or you do nothing with it.

SINCE MY STUDY IS ABOUT PEOPLE'S ABILITY TO PERCEIVE MUSIC, WHICH LARGELY DEALS WITH HEARING ABILITIES, I HAVE A CONTINUUM HERE BETWEEN KIND OF ONE AND EIGHT AND BETWEEN HEARING AND DEAF AND WHERE WOULD YOU PUT YOURSELF ON THAT LINE?

Well I would say between three and two, but closer to two.

AND HAS THAT CHANGED?

Yeah, in the years past, it would have been lower – yes, it would have been worse. I would not have educated myself to do it. As I put more and more facts in and make more of a decision about what I like and what I don't like that ratio goes up. So then I can actually, with that background, without actually having to think about it, I can hear more.

THAT IS REALLY INTERESTING, I WAS PURELY THINKING OF A MECHANICAL ABILITY TO HEAR.

I misunderstood you.

NO BUT I LOVED YOUR ANSWER AND HOW – SO MAYBE YOU CAN TALK ABOUT THIS IDEA ABOUT HEARING AND HOW TO YOU IT – MAYBE IT’S MORE THAN JUST THE ABILITY TO SENSE WHAT IS COMING IN – MAYBE IT’S HOW YOU PROCESS IT? SO, WHAT WOULD GET YOU TO A ONE?

I don’t think it’s possible, because there is always something more. Which is why I am probably being a little bold to put myself so close to two, but I strive to be in that area. Perfection is not possible. I hear more than a lot of people. There are people who hear more than I do. I don’t envy them. I enjoy what I do too, but it’s just very hard to rate something like that.

WHEN DO YOU REALIZE THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS HEARD SOMETHING MORE THAN YOU? IS IT IN A CONVERSATION WITH THEM WHEN YOU REALIZE, “OH WOW, THAT IS REALLY INTERESTING?”

Yeah, it could be that, but I think probably I listened to some, uh, some Strauss, in the delivering of that piece as being a conductor or as that other person being a conductor as I listen that person will have picked up some detail that I will have known about, but will not have put into the same context as that person. So it creates a little different color at that moment. So he heard that and I didn’t; at least I didn’t hear it like that.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE – WELL FIRST, DO YOU KNOW WHAT A COCHLEAR IMPLANT IS?

I think I do, yes.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE TO EXPERIENCE MUSIC THROUGH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

I would quit [statement said, while almost interrupting the last word of the question].

WHY?

Well, it’s because of where I am now. If I had to go back, I would be totally demoralized.

IF YOU LOST YOUR HEARING COMPLETELY AND HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

I would probably get one, but it’s just such a horrific thought to have lost what I have. I would rather lose more of my ability to move than my ability to hear.

WITH ANOTHER SUBJECT I INTERVIEWED, THIS PERSON (CASEY) IS A LITTLE BIT HARD OF HEARING AND HE SAID THAT IT WAS SOMETHING HE WAS FRUSTRATED WITH IS THAT PEOPLE THOUGHT THAT IF YOU CAN'T HEAR THEN SOMEHOW YOU ARE DEFICIENT IN MUSIC, THAT SOMEHOW MUSIC WOULDN'T MAKE SENSE TO YOU OR MUSIC – THERE IS AN ELEMENT OF MUSIC THAT YOU ARE MISSING AND SOMEHOW IT'S LESS THAN WHAT IT SHOULD BE. AND CASEY DESCRIBED MUSIC IN TERMS OF WHAT CASEY PLAYED ON THE PIANO, AND IN THE CASES WHEN CASEY COULDN'T HEAR ANYTHING, IT WAS LIKE DANCING AND IT WAS A PHYSICAL MOVEMENT AND I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD COMMENT ON THAT AND WHAT ELEMENT PHYSICAL MOVEMENT HAS, FIRST AS A VIOLINIST.

Well, you would have similar knowledge of that as I do. I think the violin is a very exacting instrument because it deals with smaller dimensions and far more activity [than the cello], and so when I play something that is difficult and I've worked out a way to psychologically get myself through it so that it will flow rather than sound too academic, uh I became very satisfied. It is a very good emotional feeling, regardless of what passage that is. And you may have – this is a little bit aside, people ask me in NPO, what do you think of this and that piece? Are you glad that we are doing this piece? And my answer is always that you've heard me say it: This is my favorite piece. And if I don't take that attitude, then I can't accomplish what I just told you about.

THEN YOU'RE NEVER SATISFIED?

Then I fail; I shouldn't do that piece.

WHEN YOU'RE PRESENTING A PERFORMANCE WITH MULTIPLE PIECES, HOW DO YOU TRANSITION BETWEEN EACH PIECE TO CONTINUE THIS LEVEL OF MOTIVATION AND SATISFACTION?

Within one program? Just shift gears. That goes there, and this is where this piece lies and define limits and within those limits, just develop everything you can.

SO YOU CLOSE ONE AND OPEN THE NEXT ONE?

Absolutely.

YOU MENTION THAT YOU ALWAYS HAVE A RHYTHM GOING THROUGH YOUR HEAD. SOMETIMES ADRIAN HEARS YOU VERBALIZE THINGS. DO YOU WHISTLE AND HUM TO YOURSELF – MELODICALY?

Yeah. Badly, but yeah.

WHY DO YOU SAY BADLY?

Because it's not good. I play the violin pretty well and I conduct pretty well, but I don't sing very well and I never was a good whistler.

IF YOU BECAME DEAF, WHAT WOULD HAPPEN WITH MUSIC IN YOUR LIFE?

I would go into deep, deep depression to start with and then I wouldn't know where I'd go.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA OF HOW YOU COULD APPROACH OR INTERACT WITH MUSIC?

I'd probably turn my back on it. I would go to something mechanical, because if my eyes still existed, I could go upstairs and start putting instruments together. Like I can do now. So I could shift.

WHAT ABOUT IF YOU BECAME BLIND?

Worse.

BECOMING BLIND WHILE PRESERVING YOUR HEARING IS BETTER THAN BECOMING DEAF?

Yes, for me – it would be, because I get far more gratification out of what I hear than what I see, even at the highest levels.

SO, IF YOU GET MORE GRATIFICATION OUT OF WHAT YOU HEAR, THEN WHY IS LOSING YOUR SIGHT WORSE.

No, I'm saying that it would be better to lose my sight.

[GLENNIE QUOTE]

Good for her.

I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD RESPOND TO THAT.

Well, I think that's great. I think that that's a good response, because she obviously has, at one point, decided that what she has is what she will use as best she can. There is a difference though, wasn't she born deaf?

NO, SHE ACTUALLY STARTED AS A FLUTE PLAYER.

But didn't she lose hearing at a young age?

NINE, I BELIEVE.

Yeah, okay, where if you compare to Beethoven, who declined – he was nearly an adult when he started to lose his hearing and then he declined over a few years. This

is a good example of what we are talking about. He had this process of what was going on in his mind and he wrote some of his best music without ever hearing it because it was there and he knew it was there and he could put it out.

SO COULD YOU COMPARE YOURSELF TO BEETHOVEN IN TERMS OF YOU SAID IF YOU LOST YOUR HEARING, YOU'D TURN YOUR BACK ON MUSIC BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T HEAR, YOU COULDN'T EXPRESS...

Yea, but Beethoven was essentially a composer, he was a performer, but he was a composer that was his greatest interest – I am not a composer and my interest in producing sound. Number one. And even with all my faculties, what do I choose next, if I can't play the violin? Or I can't conduct? I wouldn't go upstairs and work on instruments.

SO WE HAVEN'T REALLY TALKED AT ALL ABOUT YOUR CONDUCTING HISTORY AND YOUR THOUGHTS AND SATISFACTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS THROUGH CONDUCTING. WE LEFT OFF YOUR MUSICAL HISTORY AT THE POINT WHEN YOU ENTERED THE BSO. WHERE DID CONDUCTING ENTER YOUR LIFE?

Well, in conservatory in Baltimore, part of the course was beginning conducting for orchestral instruments, so I really have never thought of conducting at that point in my life. But I thought it'd be interesting to go to the class so I did and told the person who ran the class, who put something in front of me, and the players in front of me would play and I would do my number and I would sit down and play and someone else would conduct and he was interested in our responses and what would go on and it turns out that he would always have to shut me up because I had so much to say in a critical way. And that wasn't his purpose – to hear me rehearse in orchestra. He was more interested in seeing my response to rhythm from inside and from outside and I would always tell people, “no, it goes this way and no, it goes that way,” and that was very natural for me and so that was the first indication I had that maybe well first of all, that I was in the wrong class, that maybe I could hear something more than just by playing the violin. And then through the life – well actually – just after high school, I had been playing as concert master of community orchestras every where – wherever I happened to be. Even while I was playing at with the Baltimore symphony, I was concert master of a lesser orchestra, and I was doing it here under the same circumstances. I was in Brockton and the conductor of that orchestra was a member – a violinist, and after a while I came in quite a few years after he did, but after auditions, ended up sitting with him, so we became friends. So he had me as concert master in Brockton and then suddenly he also had the Newton symphony and suddenly, he needed a concert master up here, then fine. I was doing both – concert mastering. And then he got involved with some conducting influences himself and ultimately came here and became the conductor of the Boston ballet. And at that point, his life became very congested and wanted to hang on to Brockton and Newton, but needed someone to be there when he couldn't be there. So he turned to me and asked if I had any interest in rehearsing the orchestra for me and I said sure, and so that went on for a couple of years until I became very disillusioned with the fact that I would bring the orchestra to what I thought was a

particular level in relationship to what they could do and he would come in and destroy it and play the concert. And so it was when I decided that if I was that interested in conducting, that I needed to not be set in line. So fortunately, he left and I sort of eased into it. That's how I got going and when I came to Boston, if anyone had said to me: "would you like to conduct," I would have said no.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST PERFORMANCE WHERE, AT THE END OF IT, YOU FELT YOU ACHIEVED WHAT YOU WANTED TO?

I don't remember the program. I don't think I do. The accomplishments come at first in small factors – just one movement or section of a piece will go really well and I might have had trouble with myself or the orchestra, and suddenly it was there and that's intriguing, but it took many years before I could say that I finished off a whole piece with 80% success in my mind. And then even longer for a whole program.

SO AFTER YOU GOT YOUR FOOT IN THE DOOR WITH THIS BROCKTON ORCHESTRA, WHAT WAS THE NEXT STEP?

It was just Newton. It just sort of evolved because the conductor needed two conductors – here and there. And so I became the conductor of both orchestras and spent eleven years.

WHEN DID NPO... WHAT WAS THE INCEPTION OF NPO?

It was rather ugly. I had conducted the Newton symphony for probably seven, eight, or even more years. And uh, it was just same old, same old, same old, concerto, symphony, concerto, symphony, year after year, because that is what they wanted.

THIS WAS A BOARD DECISION? THIS WAS A SYMPHONY DECISION?

Well, it was just sort of yeah, not the orchestra so much, but the board liked it because they thought they understood what the audience wanted. And I thought it was just boring and there had to be something else to create more interest, so I started pushing and organizing things and doing things and finally I pushed so hard that they fired me. And then the Newton Symphony Orchestra became the new NPO.

AND KIND OF CONNECTING A COUPLE ASPECTS OF THE CONVERSATION, YOU MENTIONED THAT AS A LISTENER, YOU WERE INCREDIBLY CRITICAL AND AS A PERFORMER, YOU ARE INCREDIBLY SELF-CRITICAL AND PRESUMABLY AS A CONDUCTOR, YOU ARE ALSO CRITICAL. THE NPO IS NO BOSTON SYMPHONY, SO YOU CAN TALK A BIT ABOUT WHAT THAT MEANS AND WHAT THAT BRINGS TO YOUR EVALUATION OF THE MUSIC AND YOUR PERSONAL SATISFACTION AND WHY YOU CONTINUE TO DO IT.

Well, I think it's just my philosophy with why I work with non-professional orchestras at all. First of all, the attitude – the general attitude of the non-

professional player in a orchestral situation is far more open than in a professional situation.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY OPEN?

They're accepting. They want to know what they don't know, whereas in a professional situation, there are people like that, but there are more people who think that they now know everything they already need to know. And they can create impediments. So I get great satisfaction in hearing something crumble at the first or second rehearsal and being able to identify what to do to put it together and then have it come out sounding at least better. And then repeating that process wherever. And that, I don't claim at all to be a first of all humanitarian- it is very self-centered. I enjoy the success. I enjoy what I'm able to accomplish. But at the same time, it does carry the feelings of people and you can see the interest...

AND HOW MANY TIMES HAS NPO PERFORMED MAHLER SECOND? ONE OTHER TIME?

Not that I know of.

OH, OKAY, I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMEBODY SAY THAT THEY PLAYED IT A COUPLE OF YEARS AGO.

No. I have performed myself as a conductor – I have performed one, now two, four, five, and six.

YOU MENTIONED THAT THIS PERFORMANCE OF MAHLER SECOND FROM THE BSO BY ONE OF YOUR INFLUENTIAL CONDUCTORS IS STILL TALKED ABOUT BECAUSE IT WAS SO WONDERFUL. UM, ARE YOU TAKING ANYTHING FROM THAT WITH WHAT YOU'RE DOING NOW WITH MAHLER SECOND?

Not, now, because that was twenty years ago. I couldn't possibly remember details at that distance. But Claudio's intensity about identifying problems and solving them quickly and his obvious conception of what the whole piece is about was so clear, so apparent, and that is what I'm trying to emulate, if anything.

WHEN YOU'RE REHEARSING WITH THE ORCHESTRA, AND YOU IDENTIFY A PROBLEM, AND YOU TRY SEVERAL WAYS OF FIXING IT AND IT GETS FIXED 25% OF THE WAY, WHAT MAKES YOU IDENTIFY THE FACT THAT IT MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO BE TO WHERE YOU WANT IT? WHAT IS THE CUT OFF LINE FOR ENERGY INVESTED VERSUS RETURN?

Well, you sort of...it's never one thing in the piece. It's several, and you try to bring them all up to – unidentifiable, but equal level. So that one doesn't glare badly where another one is beautiful, because that is more disturbing to an audience if it is all at a slightly lesser level, but consistent.

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD CONDUCT WITHOUT YOUR HANDS? OR YOUR ARMS?

No.

IS THERE, BEYOND THE OBVIOUS, COMMUNICATION YOU GET FROM THAT...IS THERE ANY ELEMENT OF ARTISTIC MOVEMENT IN CONDUCTING?

No, it's the motions for me, are something that I think that I am constantly adapting and changing to accomplish what I am after at that point and sometimes it is a small motion and sometimes it is a big motion and sometimes it's another...it's one direction or another. There is a great latitude of motions to go through and the combinations with the hands and so on and you after a while, understand that every section of the orchestra has its own personality. They respond to certain things. So if I have a problem with the horns and with the violins in the same time, I have to do two things at once to accomplish that to get them together. Which at first is a problem, so I have to be making decisions like that and you have to think about what you're going to do with the motions and you're not ready to conduct and that has to be like just there, so you can just call on.

ARE YOU CONSCIOUS WHEN YOU LEARNED A NEW THING TO DO WITH YOUR HANDS AND YOU FILE THAT OR DO YOU KIND OF JUST...

No, no. I mean you start out by one, two, three, four. It's all basic. But from there on, it's what you do with that and how you alter that to create and get the player's attention in a certain way.

DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS ABOUT THE RECENT GUEST CONDUCTING THAT WE HAD?

For NPO Pops?

YEAH.

Uh, I've played under him. I think he's....

SORRY, NO, NOT THAT PERSON. THE CONCERT THAT WE HAD IN FEBRUARY, OR AT THE END OF JANUARY. WHERE WE HAD... IT WAS HIS FIRST TIME CONDUCTING.

That had nothing to do with anything but first of all, fundraising, and second of all, just catching the audience's interest for the moment.

BUT ASIDE FROM THAT, DID YOU FEEL...DID YOU WATCH THIS PERSON BECOME A BETTER CONDUCTOR IN A SENSE?

Yeah, yeah, we worked together.

THAT'S WHAT I WAS ASKING ABOUT – THIS INTERACTION AND ALMOST TEACHING.

We probably had more than half a dozen sessions together, not counting the rehearsal I was at to watch him.

AND I BELIEVE THAT YOU HAD SOME EXPERIENCE WITH THE POPS. I DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THAT. WERE YOU A PLAYER?

I am a player with the Pops – it is part of the BSO job.

OH OKAY.

So, BSO, is really 20 – 24 weeks and Pops is usually 6 – 8 week and then we usually go to Tanglewood and we are the BSO again.

SO IS THE POPS THE BSO?

Yes, the same players...

HUH.

...minus the principles of various sections and to fill that out, they bring in outsiders.

WHY IS THAT MINUS THE FIRST...

Because there is a group that is called the Boston Symphony Chamber players that functions as and travels around places to do that. And also those jobs are...the top jobs...those pay more and have more benefits...

FROM A PREVIOUS CONVERSATION, YOU MENTION THAT YOU WERE AN APPRENTICE OF JOHN WILLIAMS...

An apprentice – we became rather good friends. I wouldn't call him a personal close friend, but he's always been very friendly to me and in a way, he was a help among other people to give me the opportunity to conduct the Pops.

DO YOU THINK THERE ARE ANY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS THAT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO ASK?

No, my only possible concern is that I get off on these tangents and talk about things that may not be relative to what you're after, and if you want to pull me back, you're welcome to do that.

SO FAR, I THINK WHAT WE'VE TALKED ABOUT HAS BEEN A PRETTY GOOD CONTINUUM OF TOUCHING BACK ON THE IDEA OF

PERCEPTION OF WHAT IT MEANS AND THE EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE HERE AND THEN THIS EXPERIENCE HERE, AND SO I DON'T FEEL THAT THAT'S THE CASE.

For me, I would guess that most musicians, if you had to boil it down, it really is a selfish satisfaction that you're after. Knowing that you can do something well and consistently. And that is true in any profession, so it's just a matter of where you go.

COOL. I DON'T THINK I HAVE ANYMORE QUESTIONS. WOULD IT BE OKAY IF I CONTACTED YOU IF I HAD ANYMORE QUESTIONS? THAT IS ALL I HAVE FOR TODAY.

Thank you for your time.

ACTUALLY, I HAVE ONE MORE QUESTION AND IT IS IN REGARD TO YOUR INSTRUMENT MAKING AND YOU SAID IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE ABILITY TO HEAR AND IF YOU WITHDREW FROM MUSIC, THAT IS THE FIRST PLACE YOU'D GO. DOES THAT RELATE TO MUSIC AS MUSIC, OR DOES THAT RELATE TO SOMETHING ELSE IN YOUR LIFE?

Well I have always been very interested in doing things with my hands. And I still am. The intrigue of instruments is that after a long period of playing an instrument or different instruments or different violins or different types, you know there are many different you know qualities in different instruments. And then that sort of also applies to violas and cellos and I have come by my own research and soul-searching and have gone through a certain set of standards that has helped me do what I do consistently from one instrument to another even though those instruments are different from one another. If I lost my hearing, I would still have my knowledge, because that's mechanical and when I do something else and someone comes over and says: I don't like this about my instrument and this, this. I think about it in mechanical terms. I do hear the problem. If they wrote here on a piece of paper to me, I don't like this and this, I would probably do the same mechanical maneuver.

IS THERE ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN WHAT YOU ARE DOING WITH YOUR HANDS AND WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE MAKING CAN PRODUCE? LIKE CAN YOU PUT THE SAME AMOUNT OF QUALITY AND TIME AND EFFORT INTO MAKING A CUCKOO CLOCK?

No, because I wouldn't be interested in doing that. It doesn't intrigue me. So, it actually still comes back to sound and the production. Like I said before, as a kid, I saw a box of wood and then would see the next step and the next step and the final product would turn out to be something that looks nothing like what you started with. And that kind of evolution that produces from the physical stuff produces a sound I mean, that's remarkable thing, to go from wood, which has no personality to something that has.

COOL. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Subject 3

"Teri"

Tuesday April 4, 2006

Terri's interview was conducted with the help of an aid. Although the interview was oral, Terri's occasional comprehension difficulties necessitated the help of someone who is used to interacting with him. Text in italics was spoken by this aid.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE PIANO?

Because that was a great idea.

DID YOU LIKE ANY OTHER INSTRUMENTS BESIDES THE PIANO?

I learned how to play the violin a bit.

SO EITHER THE VIOLIN OR THE BASS?

She tried the violin a bit, I tried the violin a bit, but that was later and she had scoliosis so it was recommended that she not play an instrument that turned her to the side.

WHEN DID YOU GET YOUR COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

I got my cochlear implant in '96.

AND HOW OLD WERE YOU?

I was about 21.

HAD YOUR HEARING ALWAYS BEEN A PROBLEM?

Yeah.

WHEN YOU FIRST GOT THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT, WHAT DID IT FEEL LIKE?

It felt like a computer.

WHY DID IT SOUND LIKE A COMPUTER?

Because it was so strange at first, it was funny.

WHAT DID THE PIANO SOUND LIKE BEFORE YOU GOT THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

It sounded like deaf. *She had lost all of her hearing, that's why she said it sounded like deaf and she could feel the vibrations, but before you lost all your hearing, what did the piano sound like?* The piano sounded like the piano!

WHEN DID YOU NOTICE THAT YOU WERE LOSING YOUR HEARING?

I noticed when I was about 18. In '93 I lost my hearing when we got home. *In '93 she had a sudden onset lost that was pretty complete at school and it took a day to figure out what was going on and she got back a lot with steroids but she didn't go back to where she had been hearing. And that was before you went to Berklee. Yeah that's right. So we were worried that she would still be able to pursue music but she did, she is barely on the end of the audiogram and she used an FM unit for listening and she was the best in her ear training class.*

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE EAR TRAINING CLASS?

I could hear the music by ear.

SO YOU CAN TELL PITCHES?

Bill Thompson, he would ask everyone in the class what the chord was, and then he would ask you. Tell him. I got the chords right, and I know what key it's in.

WOW.

Yeah.

SO IF SOMEONE PLAYS A C MAJOR CHORD, CAN YOU TELL IF IT'S MAJOR OR MINOR?

Yeah, I can tell if it's C major or C minor. *Can you do that now? Yeah. You can? Yeah. For awhile you couldn't. But you can now? Yeah. It's taken a long time for it to get that point.*

AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PIECE OF MUSIC?

My favorite piece of music is Jazz. And I, um, I like, um I like, Jazz, is my favorite piece of music. *That's your favorite kind of music, what's your favorite song?* My favorite song is Back at the Chicken Shack. *Back at the Chicken Shack, it's a blues tune.*

AND WHY DO YOU LIKE THAT SONG?

Because I like it so much. And I taught myself how to do the bass lines. *You taught yourself the bass line on that?* Yep it was my idea. *Oh.*

WHAT KIND OF MUSIC DO YOU NOT LIKE?

I don't like rock and roll very much and um, classical isn't my favorite kind of music.

DID YOU PLAY CLASSICAL MUSIC FOR A LONG TIME?

Yes, several years.

WHEN DID YOU SWITCH TO JAZZ?

I switched to jazz when I was about 18.

WHY DID YOU SWITCH TO JAZZ?

Because I liked it better. I like Jazz better than classical.

DO YOU FEEL DIFFERENT WHEN YOU PLAY JAZZ?

Yeah.

CAN YOU TELL ME HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOU PLAY JAZZ?

I feel happy when I play jazz. Sometimes when I get frustrated. Sometimes when you get frustrated with classical. Yeah, uh huh.

I REALLY ENJOYED YOUR PERFORMANCE ON SATURDAY.

Oh thank you!

YOU'RE WELCOME! I WAS WONDERING IF YOU COULD TELL ME HOW YOU PREPARED FOR THAT PERFORMANCE? WHAT DID YOU DO BEFORE IT TO GET READY?

I learned a new version of Summertime. *But you didn't prepare that.* I played it with the band. *But you just decided to change it.* Hahahha funny. Hahahha *because at dinner we had talked with the bass player, Andrea, about how you had always played the bass line.* I usually play the bass line. *And she would need to play on top of the baseline somehow. Then you didn't play the bass line at all! You didn't play the roots!* I didn't play the roots. *What did you do to get ready for the gig? You and Arnie.... Planned the program.* Me and Arnie planned the program.

AND HOW DID YOU PLAN THE PROGRAM? DID YOU TALK ABOUT WHAT SONGS YOU WANTED TO PLAY?

Yes, uh huh.

AND DID YOU KNOW HOW LONG YOU WANTED TO PLAY?

Yes, we wanted to play for an hour.

WHEN YOU PLAYED THOSE SONGS, DID YOU THINK ABOUT THE TIME WHEN YOU WERE PLAYING?

I think about the timing when I am playing. *The timing of the songs?* The timing of the songs.

WHAT ABOUT THE LENGTH OF TIME? DID THE HOUR GO BY REALLY QUICKLY?

Yeah. *So how many songs do you usually play in an hour's gig?* 11 songs.

ARE YOU REALLY GOOD AT REMEMBERING SONGS?

Yeah.

HOW DO YOU REMEMBER SONGS?

I remember it by Braille.

SO YOU LEARN YOUR MUSIC THROUGH BRAILLE?

Yeah.

THAT'S REALLY COOL. WHEN YOU ARE PLAYING THE PIANO AND YOU ARE LEARNING A NEW PIECE, AND YOU HAVE A PIECE OF BRAILLE MUSIC IN FRONT OF YOU AND YOU ARE TRYING TO LEARN ONE HAND OR BOTH HANDS, DO YOU SWITCH HANDS?

Yeah, I switch hands.

SO YOU USE YOUR LEFT HAND TO READ THE BRAILLE WHEN YOU ARE LEARNING YOUR RIGHT HAND?

Yeah. *Which hand do you read Braille best with? You read with your left hand, don't you?* Yeah, I read with my left hand and I read with my right hand too when I'm learning the left hand. *Well most of the time when I see you, you teach your right hand to play then you switch it. I don't know how you do that, but you do it. She's working on a pretty complicated piece and fully annotated piece now, most of the music she learns is a lead sheet, but now she's working on a fully annotated piece, she's been working pretty intensely on that in the past few days, she can show you if you want.*

A LITTLE BIT LATER. HOW MUCH DO YOU PRACTICE?

I practice for two hours.

TWO HOURS EVERY DAY?

Umm hmmm. *I thought you were going for three? I practice for three hours. You've been slipping on it lately, so two is probably the honest answer.*

SO YOU PLAY FOR TWO HOURS ALL AT ONCE?

Yes. Mmmm hmmm. *It's nothing for her to sit and work for three or four hours.*

WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU PLAY THE PIANO?

I was thinking about my friend Emily when I was playing the piano. *When you were playing the Emily.* When I was playing the song Emily. *She thinks about her friend Emily when she's playing the song Emily.*

WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT EMILY WHEN YOU WERE PLAYING THIS SONG? WHAT DID YOU REMEMBER?

I would think about talking to Emily, and um, I'd like to invite her over, and I like to think about summertime when I was playing Summertime. And I was thinking about Sarah Vaughn when I was playing Tenderly

WHEN I SAY THE WORD MUSIC, WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO YOUR MIND? WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT FIRST?

I thinking about Sarah Vaughn, the best, and how she's singed it when I've played Tenderly. I try to play tenderly in the way that Sarah Vaughn sings it.

WHEN YOU PLAY AND YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT THAT SONG AND HOW SHE PLAYS THAT SONG, WHAT DO YOU FEEL WITH YOUR HANDS WHEN YOU ARE PLAYING?

I feel the dynamics.

DO YOU FEEL THE DYNAMICS FROM YOUR EARS OR YOUR HANDS OR YOUR LEGS?

I feel the dynamics from my ears.

WHEN YOU PLAY A NOTE ON THE PIANO AND IT PRODUCES A SOUND, DO YOU BOTH HEAR AND FEEL THAT SOUND?

Yeah!

CAN YOU TELL ME HOW IT'S DIFFERENT WITH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

It sounds like a piano with my cochlear implant. At first it would sound like a computer. Hahah. And now it sounds like a piano.

SO THE SOUND HAS CHANGED FOR YOU?

Yeah.

DO YOU EVER PLAY WITHOUT YOUR COCHLEAR IMPLANT? DO YOU EVER TURN IT OFF?

Yes! *The battery runs out, she just keeps playing.*

IS IT DIFFERENT? DO YOU HEAR ANY SOUND WITHOUT YOUR COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

Yes.

WHAT DO YOU HEAR WITHOUT IT?

I can hear the music. And I can hear people talking. And I can hear the music by ear. *No, without your implant?* I can hear the vibrations with my hands without the implant.

CAN YOU PLAY SONGS WITHOUT YOUR IMPLANT?

Yeah. Yes. *She played without it during the time that she didn't have it, you know, when she was totally deaf.*

AND DID YOU PLAY JUST BY MEMORY, OR BY FEELING?

I played just by memory. *You would also read the Braille.* And I also read the Braille too. *And sing it.* And sing it.

WHEN SOMEONE IS TALKING TO YOU AND YOU LISTEN TO SOME MUSIC, HOW IS IT DIFFERENT?

Um... People would sign to me by hand. Yeah.

DO YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN HEAR THINGS THAT PEOPLE CAN'T WITH YOUR IMPLANT?

Yeah.

WHAT CAN YOU HEAR WITH YOUR IMPLANT THAT I PROBABLY CAN'T?

Um. Um... my implant helps me hear better, it helps me hear people talking, what they are saying.

WHEN YOU PLAYED ON SATURDAY, WITH THE BASS AND DRUMS AND YOU WERE ALSO PLAYING, COULD YOU HEAR THE BASS PART? COULD YOU HEAR WHEN SHE WAS AND WASN'T PLAYING?

I can hear the bass.

WHILE YOU ARE PLAYING?

While I was playing?

WHAT ABOUT THE DRUMS?

I hear the drums far away.

THE DRUMS ARE REALLY LOUD? OR NOT?

The drums are really loud. *Usually when we get to do the setup, we wouldn't set it up that way. I was a little worried of the drums being so far away. Usually we would put the bass and the drums on her good hearing side and the audience on the other side. And we really didn't have that option.*

DO YOU HAVE TWO COCHLEAR IMPLANTS? OR JUST ONE?

I have two cochlear implants.

WHICH EAR IS BETTER FOR YOU?

My right ear is better for me.

HOW DOES YOUR RIGHT EAR HEAR DIFFERENTLY THAN YOUR LEFT EAR? DOES THE PIANO SOUND DIFFERENT?

Yeah. The piano sounds different.

BETWEEN YOUR LEFT AND RIGHT EAR?

Yeah.

CAN YOU TELL ME HOW IT SOUNDS DIFFERENT?

Um... my left implant doesn't work very well compared to the other one.

IF YOU TURN OFF YOUR IMPLANT, DO YOU EVER USE JUST ONE IMPLANT AND NOT THE OTHER?

Yeah.

WHEN DO YOU DO THAT?

I do that when my ear teacher works with me. And I only got it two years ago. *She just got the left one two years ago.*

AND WHEN YOU GOT THE LEFT ONE DID YOUR HEARING IMPROVE?

Yeah.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT BERKLEE? WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT BERKLEE AND WHAT DID YOU DO THERE?

I remember, um, my teacher at Berklee he taught me some chords. And he helped me arrange a song and he gave me some ideas.

DID YOU COMPOSE?

Yeah, I composed keys.

YOU COMPOSED KEYS?

Yeah.

IS KEYS A SONG?

Yeah. Keys is a song. *I don't know that song. Did you compose keys?* I composed compositions.

WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE COMPOSING THESE SONGS?

I was thinking about I was composing about summer and I was composing about the air conditioner fan.

REALLY!?!?

Yeah.

WHAT DID YOU COMPOSE ABOUT THE AIR CONDITIONER FAN?

I was thinking about the air conditioner and it was getting hot outside in the summer.

WHAT DID YOU COMPOSE, WHAT DID YOU WRITE ABOUT THE AIR CONDITIONER FAN?

I like when it's cool in the house.

WHAT NOTES MAKE YOU THINK ABOUT COOL ON THE PIANO, WHAT SOUNDS REMIND YOU OF COOL?

F.

F. F IS COOL?

Yeah.

IS G COOL?

Yeah.

HAVE YOU EVER GOTTEN, HAS YOUR COCHLEAR IMPLANT EVER BEEN REPROGRAMMED?

Yes.

DID THE SOUND OF YOUR PIANO CHANGE WHEN IT WAS REPROGRAMMED?

Yes.

DID YOU LIKE THAT?

I liked that.

WHEN YOU GOT YOUR NEW SPEECH MAP, CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED WHEN YOU GOT YOUR NEW SPEECH MAP?

Um, my audiologist helped me hear with my left ear, and it sounds good. *Well I think he's asking about your right one. You remember when Ann Marie changed your map to try to help you hear the music better?* Yeah. I remember Ann Marie helped me changed the map to help me hear the music better. *Did it work?* Yeah, it worked. *Well you didn't choose that map very often. No. You have two programs but you never use the second one. Yeah.*

WHY DO YOU JUST USE ONE?

Because I like one better. I like using one better because it's louder.

BECAUSE IT'S LOUDER?

Yeah.

AND TWO?

Two is softer, three is softer.

WHAT DOES THE PIANO SOUND LIKE IN TWO?

It sounds like softer?

DOES THE PITCH CHANGE?

Yeah. *Does the pitch change? The pitch change?* Yeah. *Does it change in a good way or a way you don't like?* I don't like. It just sounds in a different way.

DO YOU EVER SING TO YOURSELF?

Yes, I do.

WHAT DO YOU SING TO YOURSELF?

I sing, um, Sarah Vaughn music and I sing summertime to myself. *Do you remember that very first song you sang to yourself. Before you studied piano, you were singing to yourself. I have it on tape. You were singing yourself to sleep. What did you sing?* Little Brown Jug. Hahah.

CAN YOU HEAR EVERY NOTE ON THE PIANO?

Yeah. I can hear every note on the piano.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT THE HIGHEST PITCH YOU CAN HEAR IS?

Yeah.

WHAT IS IT?

I can hear the fifth octave. *What is the highest note you can hear on the piano?* F is the finest note on the piano.

I WOULD LIKE TO PLAY SOME MUSIC FOR YOU, TO SEE HOW YOU FEEL AND WHAT YOU NOTICE.

- 1) [BEATLES *YESTERDAY*] DO YOU RECOGNIZE THAT SONG? Yeah. WHAT IS IT? I don't know. YOU WERE TAPPING YOUR FINGERS ALONG WITH THE BEAT WHEN THAT SONG WAS PLAYING. WHAT WERE YOU LISTENING TO? Sarah Vaughn, that was Sarah Vaughn. CAN YOU TELL ME WHICH INSTRUMENTS YOU HEARD? Piano, orchestra, violin and bass. WAS THERE ANYONE SINGING? Yes. BOY OR A GIRL? Girl. WHAT DID YOU FEEL? I feel happy. CAN YOU TELL ME WHY? I feel happy because I was thinking about Sarah Vaughn playing the piano. *She's been very obsessed with Sarah Vaughn lately, it's not the first time.* LET'S TRY THE NEXT TRACK.
- 2) [BLUE MAN GROUP, *SING ALONG*] WAS THAT SONG DIFFERENT? Yeah. HOW WAS IT DIFFERENT? There was a man singing. WAS THE PITCH HIGHER OR LOWER? It was lower. WAS THE BEAT FASTER OR SLOWER. The beat was faster. DO YOU KNOW WHAT INSTRUMENTS WERE PLAYING? It sounded like drums.
- 3) [U2, *ELECTRICAL STORM*] DO YOU RECOGNIZE THAT SONG? Yeah... no. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT YOU HEARD? I heard 4 beats and there was a man singing higher. AND YOU HEARD 4 BEATS? Four beats per measure. WERE THERE ANY OTHER INSTRUMENTS THAN THE MAN SINGING? WHAT INSTRUMENTS DID YOU HEAR? Drums, saxophone and trumpets.

- 4) [THX BASS TEST] WHAT DID YOU HEAR THEN? I heard the drums and keyboard (tuba?) and violin. DID IT SOUND HIGH OR LOW TO YOU? High. DID YOU HEAR ANY LOW TONES? I heard low tones, yeah. BUT IT SOUNDED HIGH TO YOU? No it sounded low to me.
- 5) [Jazz] WHAT KIND OF MUSIC WAS THAT? It was jazz music! WHICH INSTRUMENTS DID YOU HEAR? I heard the piano and bass and drums. ANYONE SINGING? No. EXACTLY RIGHT. YOU WERE TAPPING YOUR FINGERS WITH THE BEAT, WHAT WERE YOU THINKING ABOUT WHEN YOU WERE DOING THAT? It makes me feel good when I tap my fingers?

WHEN YOU EXPLAIN TO OTHER PEOPLE THAT YOU PLAY JAZZ MUSIC AND THAT YOU ARE A PIANIST, WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THEM, OR WHAT QUESTIONS DO PEOPLE ASK YOU ABOUT YOUR MUSIC?

If I like to improvise and record and um they ask me that to do improvisation. And they help me do licks.

DID YOU IMPROVISE ON SATURDAY?

Yeah.

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING ABOUT WHEN YOU IMPROVISED?

I was thinking about having a conversation with people. And I was thinking about the saxophone and drum and bass and I was thinking about playing with my trio.

DO YOU THINK YOU COULD PLAY SOME MUSIC FOR ME ON THE PIANO?

Yeah.

[plays music, ends before piece is done {interviewer following sheet music}, with a flourish]

[battery change of cochlear implant ensues]

Did you hear when you were playing that? Yeah, I can hear with my left ear. Not very much. *Not very much.*

YOU HAVE SOME BRAILLE MUSIC HERE. CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT IT SAYS?

There is the measure number... each hand, notes.

THE NUMBERS ON THE SIDES ARE THE MEASURES?

Yeah.

CAN I PLAY A CHORD FOR YOU AND ASK YOU WHAT IT IS? [PLAYS C MAJOR CHORD]

C major chord.

[plays c minor chord]

C minor chord.

[plays D major chord]
C major chord. [incorrect]

IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL ME ABOUT MUSIC? WHAT YOU FEEL OR THINK ABOUT?

I like to listen to my own CDs and I like to listen to Sarah Vaughn. I have trouble hearing what key it's in. I have to ask my teacher to help me with what key it's in.

WHAT WILL YOU DO IN YOUR LESSON TODAY?

I'm going to ask my teacher about my Sarah Vaughn what key it's in.

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS ABOUT EMILY FOR YOUR TEACHER?

Yeah. I'm going to help me with some measures of Emily. To learn some more measures of Emily. Measures I'm having trouble with.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TALKING WITH ME TODAY.

You're welcome!

Subject 4

“Ali”

Wednesday, April 6, 2006

[Recording starts in the middle Ali's first answer. The question asked Ali's to elaborate her musical history.]

My family. We did very little singing. I think my father was quite musical. He was a clergyman, of course we sang in church, but uh, in Sunday school somewhat, in church. That was a bit. The commune that I refer to, that was a lot of singing, religious and otherwise. Here are two song books from the commune. They started communes in America, not in Germany anymore, not in Paraguay anymore I think there is one in England and about 4 in the United States. This book is from one of the communes in America. And I don't know all the songs. I was never part of a North American commune. This one is from the Society of Brothers. I spent about 10 years with them. It was very nice. A lot of singing. A lot of music. The Germans were especially in to that kind of stuff.

CAN YOU TELL ME HOW LIFE IN A COMMUNE ENCOURAGES MUSIC?

Well the togetherness definitely; at mealtimes we would always start with a song together. Often a song at the end of the meal. Sunday meetings would start with one or two songs and there were a couple in between the youth group sang together, the teenagers, all the young people. And, um, we would sing a lot. We would go on hikes and we would even sing while walking we would sit together for several hours singing songs and a lot of them came from the German youth movement where they did that kind of thing a lot apparently, idealistic singing, um that was before Hitler. Hitler ended all that. So that is where the idea came from. The groups started from um... pacifist young people in German after the First World War. A lot of people did that in Germany. They were some of the few that remained because they fled via Holland to England. The German members had to go to South America because they were Germans and they weren't allowed in England. They are still doing very well. I loved being there for ten years. When I became a member I realized that you had to be very much a part of the same thinking, the same thinking of the group. You weren't allowed to think your own thoughts. And I couldn't and neither could my father. We didn't last, well my whole family left, we could not give up our free thinking. Their belief is what Christ said: "if you are together in my name I will be amongst you and lead you" that was the idea you had to be united together and Christ would lead us. That is the commune idea.

SO YOU MENTIONED THAT MUSIC WAS A BIG PART OF COMMUNE LIFE. DID IT ALLOW YOU TO BE AN INDIVIDUAL AT ALL, DID YOU FEEL THAT YOU COULD EXPRESS YOURSELF INDIVIDUALLY AT ALL IN THESE FEELINGS THAT YOU MENTION?

No you were very, very together. That is what was going on. The thing that was fine for me, I had no need for... to be different in the singing. It was mostly their

singing, it was their songs. I don't think there was much solo singing at all. Hardly any. Maybe there was, especially in the beginning, there were some people in the group that were very much into music and they might have sung by themselves I don't know, I can't think of an occasion where there was one person singing. It was all group singing.

WOULD YOU EVER SING TO YOURSELF DURING THE DAY, THEN?

I think so, yes, definitely, yeah. All the time now, by myself. I wake up singing, practically. And as soon as I have my cochlear implant in, whatever song is in my head starts coming out.

CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT YOUR HEARING ABILITY?

It's pretty good with my implant, not perfect. Background noise gives me trouble, especially in a group. When there are four or five people sitting around a table in a group I find it difficult to follow what's happening. In all groups I find it difficult. I can talk to one person or two and I have a microphone, a couple of microphones which help a lot, directional microphones, right. For noisy environments. But here, between two people, it is very easy.

HOW HAS YOUR HEARING CHANGED OVER THE YEARS? DID YOU HAVE PERFECT HEARING AS A CHILD?

I had normal hearing until about ten years ago.

IN BOTH EARS?

Yeah.

AND, CAN WE TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT HOW YOU FELT ABOUT MUSIC, FIRST WHEN YOU HAD NORMAL HEARING. IT WAS A BIG PART OF YOUR LIFE, YOU ENJOYED SINGING, BUT CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE BIT ABOUT THE EMOTIONS THAT MUSIC WOULD HELP YOU EXPRESS OR MAYBE MUSIC DIDN'T HELP YOU EXPRESS EMOTION. WHY WAS MUSIC IMPORTANT TO YOU?

It brought about nice feelings. It often brings feelings from the past from the commune and even from my days at school, I just, for some people who lived in the north of Holland, we would sit in our first and second grade school room and we would listen to the higher grades who were in the next room, fifth and sixth, and there is one song that I learned just by listening to them. It's the national song of a northern Dutch province. And I remembered the first verse and the refrain and I looked it up on the web and they gave me the other verses too. I passed it on to my friends who are leaving back to Holland. The wife of the couple is from the place where this song is written about. She didn't know this song so I wrote it out for her. Later on I thought we probably learned things like this because it was the end of the

war and people were feeling rather nationalistic and we were singing national Dutch songs after the war.

MUSIC PLAYS A REALLY LARGE ROLE, NOW, IN CONNECTING YOU TO YOUR PAST?

Feeling wise, yeah, I think it does, I think it's a part of me that I'm not really aware of because it's always been like that. It brings up those feelings, that's right, like today, I was singing that song and I was nearly crying, you know, it just came kind of right up, and I would cry very easily, singing those old songs, when I open up this and sing one or two songs, it gives me all kinds of feelings which make me cry too. Can, very easily, the crying, of course, is probably to do with, I don't know if it's true, the negative part of being taken away from that environment. Maybe. I'm just guessing. Why one wouldn't just laugh and smile and get crying out. [subject cries a bit] You see it comes quite easy. It might be the loss of that environment, that singing, and it might have started very early in my life I was taken away from the conference center as a little kid and I found that very difficult. Because I really liked being in that conference center. There was a gardener there, he looked after me a lot, he was a big friend of mine and um, some of the people who run this place were my friends, or I was their friends and they would look after me when my parents were busy in the conference center and I missed that a lot when we left. So that might have started something inside of me that becomes active when I do this singing. Also, in the commune, in a way I was pleased to leave the commune, because I was free again, but I missed the youth group, I was beyond that actually, but I missed the singing, the togetherness, and I might even go that I miss them because I miss the conference center group, it's something in my life that I miss.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A CONFERENCE CENTER AND A COMMUNE?

The difference, in a conference center, I belonged to two actually, my parents ran two of them in Holland, they are a rural, a rural place where people can come and sing and dance, take courses, learn things, it is a Danish idea, what was the original idea (*folkeskole*) the * is a high school for locals, folks, the general population, which in the 20s and 30s was something new, the farming population was learning things there. Politics, but also arts and music all kinds of things are being given, being shown there to the rural population, several in Holland and the idea came from Denmark, my parents even went to Denmark, they were the first ones to introduce it in Holland. It's just a big building where these courses are given. It's just like here, did you see the names I wrote down? Rowe conference center in western Massachusetts and a then Friendly Crossways is a youth hostel here in the neighborhood. Rowe especially reminds me of it. My sons worked there for awhile. It was very nice for them, very good. Um, does that answer the question, whatever the question was?

YEAH, THE QUESTION WAS WHAT FEELINGS DOES MUSIC HELP YOU REMEMBER, AND YOU CERTAINLY ANSWERED THAT. YOU ANSWERED THE QUESTION THAT FEELINGS, THAT MUSIC HELPS YOU REMEMBER

THE FEELINGS OF YOUR PAST. WHAT WAS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF MUSIC?

What was my earliest? I think what I told you, that I would fall asleep as a little kid after my mid day meal and also probably after my evening meal they put me to bed and I could hear them singing downstairs in the conference center and it was wonderful listening to that. I remember that.

DID YOU EVER PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?

I tried, but I'm not very musical. I played the alto recorder, I played even in an orchestra, a youth orchestra on the commune where people played different instruments and I played the recorder. I think that's it. I don't think I ever played another instrument. Nope.

MUSIC AND SINGING ARE SUCH A BIG PART OF YOUR LIFE...

Kind of kind of...

AND YOU SING ALL THE TIME. WHY DID YOU JUST SAY YOU AREN'T VERY MUSICAL?

Oh! Oh! Already before I became deaf once somebody in the Bunnerhoff mentioned that I was singing out of tune. That was the only time that someone ever mentioned that I was singing out of tune a bit and I know that now that I have an implant, I sing out of tune quite a bit, people mention that, and sounds to me as if other people sing out of tune. It seems to be a step between my hearing and the actual.

SO, DOES THE PIANO SOUND OUT OF TUNE TO YOU?

The piano is not that bad. Mostly voices, I think. Piano is one of the best, actually, quite a good instrument for me to hear. And, No I'm not really a musician, I'm an artist, a visual artist, and I don't, like music isn't something where I could make a living of, or whatever or that I would go to musical events very much, a little bit, no, I never mentioned that; I went for three years to a school in Holland which was very into singing, into music, and after the first time we came back from the commune in '49. In '50, '51, '52 and '53 I went to a new kind of school which was very much into art and music, it was a high school. We sang together the Messiah, for instance, that was part of the group of young people who were singing the Messiah, we practiced all year for a performance at the end. Two years, perhaps, I don't know, we practiced for a whole long time, the whole Messiah. It was very nice, I enjoyed it a lot

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO PREPARE FOR THAT PERFORMANCE?

No. I don't remember. I don't remember at all. I don't think I had any feelings at all except that we were performing for them.

DO YOU REMEMBER ANY OTHER MAJOR PERFORMANCES?

Which I was part of?

YES

Let's see did we do any other performing in the Bunnerhoff? We used to dance, the youth group used to dance for as a performance, when there was a get together, like Easter, or I don't know some special occasion, we would do one or two dances in the dining room. I don't remember us singing for them, we might have and I would have been part of that...

I'VE TALKED TO A COUPLE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MUSICIANS, WHO ARE HARD OF HEARING. AND FOR THEM MUSIC AND DANCE ARE VERY CLOSELY RELATED BECAUSE FOR THEM, FOR INSTANCE, WHEN THEY ARE PLAYING THE PIANO AND THEY GO TO A PART OF THE PIANO THAT THEY CAN'T HEAR, THEIR HANDS ARE DANCING FOR THEM. IT IS A TRANSITION BETWEEN HEARING AND PHYSICAL MOVEMENT/DANCING. I WAS WONDERING IF YOU'VE EVER HAD ANY CONNECTION BETWEEN MUSIC AND DANCING AND IF THAT MIGHT HAVE CHANGED WHEN YOU LOST YOUR HEARING AND IF THE WAY YOU THOUGHT ABOUT PHYSICAL FORM AND PHYSICAL EXPRESSION CHANGED AS YOUR HEARING WAS LOST?

Yeah, I used to like the music quite a lot, which made us dance, and the community, they would play the piano, I seem to remember, and the German folk dancing was very nice, and they would sing while dancing, even in rounds. Two groups would do different things and they would sing in rounds. It was wonderful, I loved it. It was very, very nice. At the moment I don't hear the music much, it doesn't mean much for me anymore. I tried to listen to the caller who tells us what to do and it is already difficult. I hear the rhythm, of course, when we dance, and that is very important, sometimes it is hard to hear the music, but as long as you hear the rhythm of course... and then at the end of the dance we do a waltz usually, and then, it kind of goes more quiet, and then the rhythm is more quiet and it is sometimes more difficult for me to hear the rhythm and I sometimes have to look at other people to sometimes to uh to be in tune with everyone when I'm waltzing around.

CAN YOU TALK ABOUT YOUR TRANSITION TO DEAFNESS AND WHAT THAT DID TO YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT MUSIC?

No, I'm not very much into music, that's the thing, except my own music, my inner music, and that's still there and I still sing for myself and I can sing a little bit with other people you know, when I go to Holland, we kind of get together and sing old songs from our childhood our upbringing. Which is just for the fun of it, but what was I going to say...

DID YOUR INNER MUSIC CHANGE, WHEN YOU LOST YOUR HEARING?

No, no not at all. Not a bit. Nope, the same. No, I would think , you see, I'm not really a musician, I like it a lot, but it's not like, I'm an artist more than a musician, I've painted murals and I do a lot of woodwork and I design and build things out of wood, like this table, and that's my creativity. Music is not my creative part of me. I'm not creative as far as music goes. Except I make up a little bit of [taps on table] when I wait for the light and my car goes blinking, I always hear myself making variations on those blinking. That always happens naturally without me thinking about it.

WITH THIS TABLE, OR WHEN YOU MAKE SOMETHING OUT OF WOOD, DO YOU REMEMBER SONGS, OR ANYTHING BECAUSE OF WHAT YOU'RE MAKING?

No, not a bit, it's not very much part of me in that respect. Words will kind of pop into my head sometimes, or when I see a word, often, now and then, not often, a song will pop into my head that has that word in it. Just a word. My grandfather. [sings a song about a grandfather clock] that's funny, it just popped in. It was too high for the shelf, that's right.... Now I have not sung this song for years, but it's still right there, it's interesting, these songs last, and still stay in my head. I don't know where I learned it, in England maybe.

WHY DO YOU THINK YOU ARE ABLE TO REMEMBER SONGS SO WELL?

I don't know, no idea, of course a tune with words is easier to remember than just words, obviously, to me it seems very much so, we would learn them as teenagers and they would just hang on. Some, not all.

[CONTINUUM QUESTION]

It depends, with or without my hearing aid?

BOTH

Without my hearing aid, I would place myself 7.5 with my hearing I would put myself around 5 or 6ish, somewhere over here, something like that.

DO YOU KNOW WHICH FREQUENCIES YOU CAN HEAR WITH YOUR IMPLANT?

[hears hissing sound] that's a hissing sound, yes I can hear that.

AND IF I MAKE THIS SOUND [LOW VOCAL NOTE]?

[repeats note and replicates the tone] I can hear it lower too.

WHEN YOU GET INTO LOWER FREQUENCIES, YOUR BODY IS ABLE TO FEEL IT IN DIFFERENT WAYS. DO YOU NOTICE THAT WITH AND

WITHOUT YOUR IMPLANT THAT YOU NOTICE SOUNDS DIFFERENTLY BECAUSE YOU CAN'T HEAR IT ANYMORE?

No. No, I don't think so. I think there is no feeling if I can't hear it, I think.

SO WHEN YOU TAKE OFF YOUR IMPLANT, WHAT DO YOU FEEL AROUND YOU? VIBRATIONS? TALKING?

A little bit, very little, very little, um, it becomes very quiet.

WHERE DO YOU FEEL IT?

[pause]

[MENTIONS EVELYN GLENNIE FEELING...]

Nothing of that with me, nothing. Not at all. No.

HOW SOON AFTER YOU LOST YOUR HEARING DID YOU GET YOUR CI?

It went very slow. I went to a very noisy concert, I think it was a dance band, a jazz band where we were dancing in Jamaica Plain, somewhere over there, it was so noisy that it hurt my ears while I was later. And later, a few years later, it went slowly, I realized that it started kind of around that time and that that might have been the cause. And when I talked to a psychic once, the psychic said I don't want to hear my father. And there is also something in the past when my father said "why don't you stop shouting, I'm not listening to you anymore" so I don't know if the psychic picked that up or what. Um, I remember that because we were both embarrassed, we have a good relationship, my dad and I, he could get very angry sometimes. Who knows if it could be a combination of the two? What was the question again?

I ASKED YOU HOW LONG AFTER YOU LOST YOUR HEARING YOU GOT YOUR CI...

Um, you see it was very little in the beginning, it must have been between 5 and 10, maybe 8 years, I don't know exactly.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU HAD YOUR IMPLANT?

Since 2000.

WHAT KIND IS IT?

[takes it out...] Clarion.

WHAT DID SOUNDS FIRST SOUND LIKE WHEN YOU GOT YOUR IMPLANT TURNED ON?

I'm getting very forgetful, so at the moment I can't remember.

DID PEOPLE SOUND DIFFERENT WHEN THEY SPOKE TO YOU?

I think a bit... Now they sound normal. I think they sounded a little different, a little mechanical or whatever. I seem to vaguely remember that, I remember thinking about it or saying that, I don't actually remember the sounds. I think I found it a little mechanical sounding.

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST PIECE OF MUSIC YOU HEARD WITH YOUR IMPLANT?

Oh dear. Nope.

OR HOW YOU SOUNDED? YOUR VOICE, YOUR SINGING?

Nope, I do not remember that.

HAVE YOUR MUSICAL TASTES CHANGED SINCE YOU GOT YOUR IMPLANT?

Nope.

HOW DO PEOPLE RESPOND, OR HAVE YOU TOLD PEOPLE THAT YOU LIKE TO SING, AND THAT YOU HAVE THE COCHLEAR IMPLANT, HAVE PEOPLE SAID ANYTHING INTERESTING ABOUT THAT?

Very little, I usually am the one who says something about it. I have joined an open microphone before a few times and I have done some singing and they seem to like it. And most of the time at the beginning, I tell people that I have a cochlear implant and that I might not quite be in tune. But I enjoy singing so I'll do it anyway. And I have had no negative response. I don't know how much, people easily say that, maybe they don't want to put me down, but the last time that I was singing up in Somerville, I was singing the *Raggle Taggle Gypsy Zoe*, very nice song, and people stood up and clapped and were very pleased with the song.

CAN YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC OR CAN YOU FEEL MUSIC IF YOU TURN YOUR IMPLANT OFF?

I don't think so. No I doubt it. I don't think I can hear anything anymore. Maybe if it's really loud. I can definitely hear the, with this ear, I can hear the rhythm, just about, but I don't think I can hear any sound, not really.

WHAT DOES THE RHYTHM SOUND LIKE?

[MUMBLES STRESSES IN A MUSICAL BEAT, BUT WITH TONE]

So there might be a little bit of tune to it. A little, yeah. Kind of like what I'm singing. The sound I'm making right now.

WHAT LANGUAGE DO YOU THINK IN?

English and Dutch. I'm beginning to start thinking in Dutch again, I'm beginning to hear myself saying Dutch things and Dutch words, it's kind of funny you know. And I can sing Dutch songs as well as I can sing English songs. It's been awhile since I've been to Holland.

WHAT YEAR WERE YOU BORN?

1936.

DO YOU EVER GO TO A SPORTING EVENT?

No.

DO YOU EVER WATCH THEM ON TV?

No, skating maybe, but not really.

I WAS JUST WONDERING IF YOU DIFFERENTIATE A TUNE FROM A BAND IN A LARGE CROWD.

No, not really, I've been watching this Dutch violinist on TV recently, he's very good, you should know about him. He takes his group all around the world. He's been in the states a number of times.

I MIGHT KNOW HIM, WHAT'S HIS NAME?

Andre R___ [Rieu].

YEAH, I KNOW HIM, A BIG SHOWMAN.

Yeah, exactly, he'll get kids to dance and sing or 3 or 4 good singing women who will sing part of something, and I really enjoy listening to that stuff.

AND HE'LL GO TO A PLACE AND FILL A HUGE STADIUM?

Right exactly. WGBH, they put on these programs.

DO YOU LIKE LISTENING TO THAT ON THE TV?

Yeah I do, I would love to be a part of it someday.

CAN YOU HEAR BOTH THE MELODY AND THE RHYTHM?

Oh yeah, I can.

ARE THERE ANY SONGS YOU RECOGNIZE?

Yeah, the Limburgh national anthem. According to [Andre] they are very nationalistic in that province. He's a bit of a showman. He likes to do the Limburgh national anthem; there was a performance at the stadium. Everyone would join in. It was very nice. Most Dutch people know it, I think. It was a great song. I'm surprised that the couple that I wrote this song down for didn't know it. Perhaps it was just after the war that these songs were popular in Holland? It could well be.

DO YOU HAVE DIFFERENT SPEECH MAPS ON YOUR CI?

It makes very little difference [adjusts it] to tell you the truth, it seems already similar, there is a little difference, turning this [a knob], I don't really use it, and I turn on the volume, I'm sure there is a little difference turning these two knobs, but I basically don't.

DOES IT CHANGE SPEECH OR MUSIC? BOTH?

To tell you the truth, I'm not sure.

CD MUSIC:

- 1) [Beetles, *Yesterday*] [Ali starts singing with it, the words, but out of tune, and even the instrumental as well...] SO YOU CERTAINLY RECOGNIZE IT. Oh yes, absolutely! Yeah. AND YOU CAN HEAR ALL THE INSTRUMENTS? No, I don't think so. SO WHAT DO YOU HEAR WHEN YOU LISTEN TO THAT? I hear the general melody and I hear the words singing. DO YOU HEAR A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE GUITAR AND THE ORCHESTRA? Maybe, let me try again... {plays another few seconds of the song} I hear the bass song, but I concentrate on the voice, of course, and then there is the background, that is what I would always do. Now that you are asking me, I could hear the bass instrument, the cello.
- 2) A lot of nice rhythm going on. Um, I just hear it as a combined thing, I can't pick out instruments very well, except this sound [taps on table] and I didn't recognize the song. IT ISN'T A VERY WELL KNOWN SONG, RECENT AND I PICKED IT FOR IT SOUNDING VERY DIFFERENT. COULD YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT WAS BEING SAID? No, I didn't try to. I'm not sure if I could if I really tried hard. BUT YOU COULD TELL THAT THERE WAS A VOICE? Oh absolutely, a male voice, right? YES.
- 3) [U2] There is a combination of all these instruments, and I can hear the voice in it, and I can't very easily pick out the various different instruments. DO YOU KNOW IF IT WAS A MALE OR FEMALE VOICE? I think, oh dear, good point... I didn't... [PLAY A FEW MORE SECONDS] Huh, I think it could be either, I'm not sure, probably a young man, but I'm not sure. HAVE YOU HEARD OF U2?

No. I'm out of it. ☺ [names his records, long list] DO YOU LISTEN TO MUSIC A LOT? I used to all the time. AND NOW? Very little, I want to, but I never get around to it. DO YOU KNOW WHY? IS IT BECAUSE OF YOUR HEARING OR BECAUSE YOU ARE BUSY? Part of it is because I'm busy, I think, I don't spend very much time sitting around, you know, I'm usually running around doing things, um and because I'm doing it by myself, I used to listen to it with my wife and two younger sons, we would listen to it and have it on. Especially, I've gotten the record player fixed up, it's working good, and I've once or twice listened to the old songs, I should do a bit more of it because I really like it and see how much I remember of that period. I used to know a lot of Joan Baiz songs.

- 4) {NO BASS ON PLAYER, SKIPPED THIS SONG; INAUDIBLE TO INTERVIEWER} CAN YOU HEAR VERY LOW TONES WHEN YOU LISTEN TO A SYMPHONY, FOR EXAMPLE? I'm not quite sure. WHAT ABOUT YOUR CAR WHEN YOU PRESS ON THE GAS? Yes, I can hear that.
- 5) [jazz] [Ali immediately says "nice piano, very nice"] it sounds as if there is a singer in the background. CONVERSATION, IT'S A JAZZ CLUB Oh, really? So we are basically listening to the piano? IT'S DRUMS AND CYMBALS WITH THE PIANO. I can practically only hear the piano, the rest is practically nothing, I know there is more, but I can't on it very well. I'm pleased with the piano, but that's it. [trumpets enter loudly] Now they come up, I hear trumpets or something. Yep. A bit confusing for me. WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE? This last bit? It's confusing. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? They did have a rhythm, and I'm sure they were working together, but it sounded nearly chaotic to me, not quite, but nearly. Because it was in rhythm, it sounded like they knew what they were doing. CAN YOU HEAR MELODIES not at the end here. CAN YOU HEAR HARMONY BETWEEN INSTRUMENTS? Usually, yes, but not at the end here. SO IF ONE PERSON IS SINGING A NOTE AND SOMEONE ELSE STARTS SINGING A NOTE THAT GOES TOGETHER, WHEN THE SECOND PERSON STARTS SINGING, CAN YOU HEAR THAT DIFFERENCE? Yeah, I think so, yeah, it's been awhile.

SO I THINK THAT'S ABOUT ALL THE QUESTIONS I HAVE BUT ONE LAST THING, WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR LIFE?

I'm a craftsman or a woodworker or a designer, I used to be in architecture, before I became deaf, and now I do stuff on my own. [tells of stuff he's done to his house] I run this house. There are four people living here so there is always something going on. Soon I should be working in the yard. I just installed those detectors...

CARBON MONOXIDE?

Yes.

I REALLY, REALLY ENJOYED TALKING TO YOU ALI. THANK YOU!

I wasn't sure it would fit your project at all.

IT WAS PERFECT! THANK YOU!

Subject 5
"Pat"
Sunday April 9, 2006

DO YOU HAVE A GOOD IDEA OF WHAT MY PROJECT IS?

Go ahead and explain it again.

THE POINT OF WHAT I AM DOING IS TO INVESTIGATE HOW HEARING ABILITY INFLUENCES MUSIC PERCEPTION. AND WHAT I MEAN BY MUSIC PERCEPTION IS HOW MUSIC AFFECTS YOUR LIFE, I'M ONLY INTERVIEWING MUSICIANS SO PEOPLE WHO CONSCIOUSLY MADE A CHOICE THAT MUSIC IS A PART OF THEIR LIFE AND I AM LOOKING AT HOW THEY HEAR MUSIC HOW THEY THINK ABOUT MUSIC WHAT MUSIC CONNECTS TO IN THEIR LIFE AND WHETHER IT IS SOMETHING THAT PROVOKES MEMORIES OR SOMETHING THAT IS JUST A HOBBY OR SOMETHING THAT IS A MECHANICAL PURSUIT, AN ARTISTIC PHYSICAL MOVEMENT PURSUIT. I'M GOING TO WRITE ALL THESE STORIES UP AND LOOK AT ASPECTS OF THE ANSWERS I'VE GOTTEN CROSSED INTO EACH OTHER. AND SAY WHAT EVERYONE SAYS ABOUT MUSIC WITH RELATION TO THEIR ABILITY TO HEAR MUSIC. I'M GOING TO INTERVIEW YOU BECAUSE I THINK MUSIC IS A BIG PART OF YOUR LIFE AND I'M EXTREMELY INTERESTED IN YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT MUSIC.

WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF MUSIC?

I have no idea about that question. I remember elementary music classes, I guess, but

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT IT?

You got to play the xylophone. We had xylophones, yeah, that was really cool. I don't know why we never got to play with them. Only once a year, there were like 11 of them. I remember singing a lot... in elementary school you sing a lot.

DID YOU SING OUTSIDE SCHOOL?

No, I sang in choirs through high school but the only reason they liked me, I made it to honors choir, but the only reason they liked me was because I sang really loud and I realized at one point like why I'm amazed at honors choir that people are really good, they can really sing, and why am I here?

YOU'VE ALWAYS HAD A GOOD SENSE OF INTONATION?

I wouldn't say that at all. I definitely don't think so. In fact I would say that intonation is something that I've never really really had a good sense for until I got to college. I remember during piano lessons when I was little and I didn't I couldn't

hear the differences in the tone of the piano, like when my teacher and my sister, because she played the piano too, it was when my teacher was trying to play to me once what the different sounds were when you played the keys differently. I totally couldn't hear it. It was like loud or soft. So it depends on how you attack it, it will make a harsher sound or a warmer sound.

WHAT WAS YOUR PROGRESSION OF INSTRUMENTS?

I started with the piano when I was pretty little, in kindergarten I think maybe, I don't even remember, they tried to start me on the Suzuki method, but I didn't like it. I played the piano for a really long time.

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT YOU DIDN'T LIKE ABOUT THE SUZUKI METHOD?

You had to listen to tapes, right? I hated listening to tapes... "why do I have to listen to these stupid shitty recordings of people playing the piano, and I just want to play the piano" what does listening to tapes have to do with learning the piano... I was just stupid too.

BUT YOU PLAYED THE PIANO FOR A REALLY LONG TIME

And I played the piano and then in seventh grade in public school that's where I started getting involved in band and so I played the clarinet for a summer and about six months. The reason I played the clarinet is actually because I wanted play the bassoon and you have to start on the clarinet. And that was pretty fun actually.

SO BY 7TH GRADE YOU KNEW THAT YOU WANTED TO PLAY THE BASSOON?

Mmm hmm. And that was probably because my sister played, she played the oboe, she played in a wind quintet for awhile and so I was able to go to those performances and I always thought that the bassoon was more interesting than whatever the rest of the quintet would do, you know? Maybe I sort of slighted the oboe because I thought I knew what it was. The bassoon was like "whoa, that's cool" and my sister told me some stuff about it. I just liked the way it was big and also the keys are really cool if you look at them and so yeah.

ONCE YOU STARTED PLAYING THE BASSOON AFTER THE CLARINET, DID YOU STICK WITH THAT AS YOUR MAIN INSTRUMENT?

I still had to play the piano, but I never really liked playing the piano. I never liked it. In fact that was the source of most of my arguments with my parents. About the piano. My mom was like you can't give it up now, you have to stick with it. And I was like "I hate the piano, it sucks!" and we would have huge fights about getting me to practice. I just didn't want to, I don't know why. I mean 30 minutes a day when you are in junior high and high school...? That's not a bit deal! And I was always like

“you can’t make me!” It was just a huge meltdown, anger, arguments over the piano. I haven’t played the piano since sophomore year in high school, I think.

DO YOU STILL PLAY THE PIANO AT ALL?

Not now it’s like man I really wish I could play piano better because I think if I went back to it now I would get a lot of satisfaction from it, actually. But not really I never really took it seriously and I never really worked at it I think, I did concerts but I always thought I sucked. I never really played anything well on the piano.

HOW DID YOUR FOCUS IN PRACTICING CHANGE WHEN YOU STARTED THE BASSOON?

Yeah, actually, because I liked the bassoon, for some reason, and I took private lessons and my teacher, I think I owe a lot to him just because he didn’t put too much pressure on it kind of, and he was just kind of a fun and nice guy and he made lessons fun and I remember specifically in high school I would practice a lot more... I practiced a lot more because there were certain things that I wanted try to do exactly and I practiced because I really wanted to get into all state etc.

WAS THERE ANYTHING ABOUT THE ACTUAL SOUND OF THE BASSOON THAT CAPTIVATED YOU?

Um more later than early on, I liked the way it was a low instrument, because when I was younger that was pretty much all I could tell you was like it wasn’t high. And it has it’s own sound too.

WAS THERE EVER A TOUCH THING ASSOCIATED WITH IT?

Um you needed big hands I was afraid that my hands weren’t going to be big enough actually but other than that what do you mean?

KIND OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SOUND ASSOCIATIONS AND FEEL ASSOCIATIONS.

No not really, but I played on different bassoons in my life and every time you switch bassoons it was horribly frustrating and hard. Because your fingers get so used to one way that when you switch it was really hard. I started on a plastic bassoon that was about the same size but to help the students, there were keys that were full keys instead of where you normally put your third finger where there is just an open hole that you cover with your finger. And so making a switch from that to the one wooden bassoon that the school had, that was SO hard because my fingers totally wouldn’t cover that hole and if you don’t cover that hole, most of your notes don’t come out. That was the worst thing ever because I didn’t want to practice because I thought it would sound really bad and you just feel stupid.

SO HOW MUCH OF YOUR TIME IS DEVOTED TO MUSIC?

Um, in high school I usually had a zero hour with a wind ensemble then there would be band and senior year I did a Dixie land band too, which was really cool, I played the tuba part and that was really fun.

THIS WAS ALL THROUGH PUBLIC SCHOOL?

Umm mostly, and then I also did a youth orchestra too.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE BASSOON THAT YOU THINK COMPLEMENTS PAT?

Um I think I'm lucky there aren't many bassoonists. It's awesome because everyone needs a bassoon and it would be so much harder if everyone played the bassoon or if I played the clarinet, and in that sense it's made it really easy for me for to like get involved in groups because they need me much more than they need someone else. Um one thing that's interesting is bassoon players are generally weird, I think, very weird, I remember all state band one year, we had a low reed sectional and so I walked in and I was like "oh my god, I've never seen a room with such freaks before, it was UNBELIEVABLE these people were like all like just WEIRD! This was totally weird" Also in junior high and high school some guys had the biggest problem with the German name for the bassoon "fagot"

CAN YOU TALK A LITTLE ABOUT HOW THE WIND SECTION VIEWS THE BASSOON?

I think in junior high and high school, the bassoon is usually not good, we rarely had, well there weren't any good bassoons besides me, and there weren't any good oboists, I don't know why, but at least there is usually a good clarinet and one good flute and yeah, I don't know...

WHO ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

Ummm... my first was a junior high teacher and they were my junior high band director, actually, they made it fun, he showed me the bassoon is used in a lot of movie soundtracks just like all the time and he would always take out little licks and play them and teach them to me. It was cool and that was really cool. I haven't really noticed the names of big famous bassoonists until recently.

DO YOU HAVE FAVORITE PIECES?

Yeah. For the bassoon in terms of orchestra repertoire we had this one concert and it was the best concert ever. I auditioned for the youth orchestra and got principal and the concert, the first piece was Night on Fall Mountain and then we played Star Wars and then Symphony Fantastique, which has tons of bassoon stuff, Berlios like loved the bassoon, it's really cool and then we played the Sorcerer's Apprentice which also has this really cool bassoon part.

HOW OFTEN DO YOU PERFORM?

Now, about twice or three times per semester.

WHAT DO YOU TRY TO CONVEY WHEN YOU PERFORM?

I thin it depends on whatever I'm doing. So if I am doing a solo piece, there is usually a distinct message that the composer is trying to convey, I don't usually abstract it past that. In orchestral playing, like a Wagner solo, I think people try to convey a mood, and a lot of times it really helps when the conductor tells you how to shape something like make it lazy or make it sound sad or happy or whatever, that really gets communicated...

DO YOU HAVE ANY SPECIAL THINGS YOU DO TO PREPARE FOR A PERFORMANCE?

Now I eat a banana, have you heard about this? It works for everyone, you eat a banana about an hour to an hour and a half before you perform and the bananas have beta blockers, I don't know what betas they are blocking, but the effects are known, but a flute told me that at school they used to eat bananas all the time or professional soloists, you can get drugs that do the same thing and you are supposed to take them all the time. But I'll stick with bananas. Other than that, no not really. However, before my first orchestral solo, which was like 4 bars of a Beethoven symphony, I was SO freaked out, it was so bad, I probably should have done some calming down exercises or something.

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A TIME WHERE YOU COULD ONLY EXPRESS AN IDEA IN YOUR HEAD ADEQUATELY THROUGH MUSIC?

I think so, but they are usually musical ideas, they aren't usually an idea in words.

[CONTINUUM QUESTION 1 TO 8]

Probably one, I think I hear pretty well.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MUSICAL SOUND?

Um, hmmm. I don't think I have a favorite sound, I really like the low sound of the bassoon and I like the rich sound of the strings, and I really like the low full sound of the horns, rich and dark, the filled out sound of the symphony, I like crazy sounds sometimes, like the bubbling in Sorcerer's Apprentice.

ANY SOUNDS THAT MAKE YOU CRINGE?

Um no, not really, I really enjoy crazy trumpet stuff, especially when the trumpet soars over the symphony. I think bad make me cringe really bad, yeah, I always felt that being the junior high orchestra conductor must be so much worse then being the junior high band director. You know, you have to be able to deal with, so if a kid is

really bad at the clarinet, they are really bad, but if a kid is really bad at the violin, "OH MY GOD!" it would hurt so bad!, UGH UGH, make it stop! It hurts!

WHAT ABOUT GENRE?

I don't really like baroque music, maybe if I tried to listen to it now, I think I've come a long way in my ability to listen to music, music appreciation, but I don't really like baroque music like Vivaldi or Bach, I can recognize some things as being technically cool, you know, and sometimes it's cool, but really generally loving and enjoying it, I really don't do that.

OUTSIDE OF CLASSICAL?

Someone was interviewing people on what kind of music they like and everyone said they hated rap/hip hop. I love rap! I don't think so, no. Pop kind of sucks sometimes, I really don't like the Dixie Chicks.

WHEN YOU LISTEN TO A SYMPHONY, WHAT CATCHES YOUR ATTENTION?

The winds, mostly, and that's also because that's what I'm really interested in. because I really can relate and I think it's really interesting to watch, like in the BSO the professionals, they, you know, it's really cool to watch, and I also really like watching the percussionists and stuff, and in an orchestra too watching the whole string section you know when all the bows are moving together, that's really cool.

ARE YOU MORE OF A RHYTHM OR MELODY LISTENER, IS THAT A FAIR QUESTION?

I don't know. I don't know how to quantify that in my head. Maybe rhythm, maybe. I'm not sure.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE ABOUT MUSIC BESIDES WHAT COMES THROUGH YOUR EARS?

One thing, especially about me is I really like music because it's something I do because I want to, sort of, because it isn't related to specifically, COLLEGE X, and I think I love it because it can't be taken away from me. Nobody can come and, yeah, tell me "oh you can't do this" I just feel like it can't be taken away from me and that's one of the nicest things. And I'm also fortunate because music seems like it's really portioned from the rest of my life because they just don't overlap that much, at all. It's kind of just different from everything else.

WHAT'S THE FIRST THING THAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD MUSIC?

A conductor I guess.

WHAT DO YOU THINK IT WOULD BE LIKE TO EXPERIENCE MUSIC THROUGH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

(EXPLAIN ELECTRICAL IMPULSES ETC. OF A CI)

Hmm that would be nuts.

PERHAPS A DIFFERENT QUESTION, IF THE SOUND WAS RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM HOW YOU PERCEIVE IT RIGHT NOW, DO YOU THINK THAT YOU ARE EVEN ABLE TO COMMENT ON HOW THAT WOULD EFFECT.

It's speculation, but if you always heard things in one way, I think that different music would still sound different so it seems that you would be able to get a different reaction for different kinds of music. I don't know if it's the details or the overall feeling of music that makes people be charged emotional, that really effects people, you know, and I would think, I believe actually, that music there is something there that, even if you don't fell all the details, that even if they are all blended together, if that's the way you hear, I think music could still mean the same thing.

IF YOU BECAME DEAF, WITH NO PERCEPTION FROM YOUR HEARS, PERHAPS ONLY TOUCH, OR FEELING OR VISUAL, WHAT DO YOU THINK WOULD STILL CAPTIVATE YOU ABOUT MUSIC?

Specifically with vibration, I notice a lot of things with the brass, the reed will vibrate differently, it doesn't vibrate in a way that you can see, but I can feel it on my lips when they play, it's going nuts, it's really cool and the same thing happens with the tymponi, it's so cool, the reed just vibrates just a slight bit after it sounds. Stuff like that is really cool, I don't know how that would work for a deaf musician, but it seems like maybe that would be a cool thing.

DO YOU THINK BEING DEAF WOULD PROHIBIT YOU FROM BEING A MUSICIAN?

In the way I'm understanding it, yeah. Just because I don't understand how they could play with a group sort of, you know? Yeah.

DO YOU WHISTLE OR HUM TO YOURSELF?

Not very much, rarely whistle, and I hum all of my tunes, I don't really sing in the shower or anything like that. So not a whole lot.

WOULD YOU SING WHILE YOU PRAYED IF YOU WERE RELIGIOUS?

Probably not, maybe, at yoga, we had a substitute last week and they asked us to chant, and we never do that, so they could feel it, and it was like "what are we doing?!"

[GLENNIE QUOTE]

I think she's right. I think the conflicts we have about music and the deaf community, they are based on the majority sort of the majority of people's opinions and so the assumptions I'm not sure how they would play in a symphony or with a group. I wonder if you could be deaf and play in a symphony, if you could pick up on enough other things that you would still be a part of the group. I think it would be so hard.

WHAT IS YOUR PERCEPTION OF THE DEAF COMMUNITY?

When I learned about deaf stuff awhile ago, we watched a movie on cochlear implants it was a big thing some families you can't assume that a deaf person is any worse off than anyone else. Being deaf is part of your identity, I guess, sort of, so getting a cochlear implant is in a sense like getting rid of their identity so it's part of your identity to experience music one way then like why, they don't want to change it, they shouldn't have to. There is no way to compare, or perhaps there are, it's entirely possible that the music that a deaf person hears is much bigger and much more musical or much more accurate than someone who hears normally.

COULD YOU GO BACK TO TOUCH/HEARING?

I think a lot of touch or vibrations I think there's, I don't know, I think it's mostly [inaudible]. How you notice that, it still involves a lot of your ears.

[EVELYN GLENNIE TONES IN LEGS ETC.] HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED THAT AT ALL ON ANY LEVEL?

I definitely feel the resonance of the basses, just thinking about it, I feel it a lot differently than like the flutes.

ANYTHING ELSE?

I used to practice in the stairwell in high school. I loved the resonance and the big volume above me. It probably wasn't good for my playing. It was the sense of sound. Also the difference between live and recordings, the space, the projection, the speakers never sound that good.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME!

Subject 6

"Alex"

Monday April 3, 2006

This interview was conducted via email. The questions were sent and the following answers were received. The text below is pasted verbatim, including spelling/grammar errors, from the email to conserve the subject's voice.

What is your earliest memory of music?

I remember publicly proclaiming my plans to become a rock star by age 2 or 3. I used to fall asleep to Raffi tapes every time i took a nap. My Grandma has tape recordings of me singing Raffi songs from about this age--a neighbor of hers thought I had a really cute voice or something and would come over to record me on tape. I also sang in the church choir. At my church the church choir begins for kids in kindergarten with the Cherub Choir, but I would sneak up to the rehearsals that my older brother and sister had when i was younger than this because i couldn't wait to start!

Which instruments do you [have you] play[ed]?

my main instrument is acoustic bass. i started playing in the school orchestra in the 4th grade. my first instrument was piano. i took piano lessons from age 5 to 13 or so. now i also toy around with the guitar and the drums. here in morocco, i'm learning the moroccan bass, Gimbri, which plays the bass role in Gnawa music (sufi-Islamic trance music), but it's held like a guitar across the lap and played with a different technique all together. the body of the instrument is leather, not wood and played like a drum as the strings are struck.

Why did you choose to play the [insert instrument here]?

I originally wanted to play the drums when i was young but my mother didn't want to hear me practicing drums so suggested i play the bass, "it's another...rhythmic...instrument..." i really like the sound of the acoustic guitar and acoustic bass because they sound more natural and less cheesy.

Is there anything special about your instrument that complements who you are?

mmm...not really? one interesting thing is that bass and gimbri are both instruments that are usually played by men. this has yielded some interesting nicknames for me: "nu yin xiong" in china, which means "woman hero" and "ma'alema" in morocco, which means (female master)

Who are your musical influences? What have you taken from them?

Elliott Smith writes amazing melodies. they are very delicate and natural, yet extremely varied and creative. no song sounds like the next. Paul Simon writes catchy songs that aren't cheesy somehow. that's my main thing, i hate cheesy music. he also incorporates a lot of world music aspects that keep things exciting.

Charlie Haden has a great sound aesthetic in his bass playing. although, he has this one band that i really hate, The Quartet West, which is interesting. he has the best sound of any bass player, but then he just wastes it with this cheesey freaking sax player and music! i also like wilco a lot right now, nick drake, iron and wine, fiona apple. some of my favorite music to listen to is not my favorite music to study.

What are some of your favorite pieces and why? Your dislikes?

I love "angeles" by elliott smith, for some of the reasons mentioned above--great melody. i don't even understand all the lyrics, but i think that's okay sometimes to have the meaning obscure. then all of the sudden a line just pops out at you and you just want to listen to that 10 seconds over and over again. hear it all day long. i'm a real "repeat" listener. i love to put on headphones and listen to the same song over and over again. so much that my roommates get real annoyed. i also like "i want you back" by the jackson 5 because it's the catchiest fucking song i've ever heard and just makes me super happy.

How would you imagine your life without music?

i don't think it ever would be without music because it's in my head and it's there to stay. when i don't play at all for a long time i definitely go into withdrawal and can't stop tapping on things all day long. i hate going long periods without listening to music, or without listening to music i like. thank God for the mp3 player, i don't know what i would do without it.

When you experience other musicians performing, what do you concentrate on?

i guess i'm drawn to the bass, but these days as i learn more instruments and more about arranging, my listening has gotten a lot more depth. i notice a lot about the arrangement of the song, how it develops with instrumentation. the song form, chord changes. if there are cliches i notice right away and i'm bothered by it more than i used to be. also, the instrumentation makes a huge difference to me, i notice more subtleties in stylistic genres.

When you perform, what are you trying to convey to the audience?

An emotion, i guess. I want them to feel how I feel when I wrote the song. Or if it's someone else's song I try to imagine how they were feeling when they wrote the song and convey that. or if i'm feeling really strongly about something at the time i'll play to convey my own emotions and not the composers's. but definitely the feeling is more important than technique or whatever. also, if i can get them grooving that's great.

How do you prepare for a performance?

get baked and eat cookies? just kidding! actually, these days i'll just show up and look pretty. try to get there on time. but if it's some big performance that i'm

nervous for maybe i'll have a nice healthy meal beforehand. practice the parts if they're hard... be in a good mood, try to have my life in order in other respects, i think that's important to performance. or the opposite. sometimes being totally fucked and lost will lead to a good performance, but there's a risk with that too...

How does music affect your life beyond performing?

I think it's changed my demeanor a lot. i'm more patient with things than i used to be. jazz has this "aesthetic of cool" thing that i try to translate to my personal life. speaking of my personal life, music has a huge affect on that, because almost all of my friends are musicians now. we're very much in our own community, constantly talking about music, sharing music, attending each others performances. it's a great way of life.

Is there a connection between music and movement (apart from sound)? I ask this because I've talked to some individuals who have limited hearing and one said when she plays the piano beyond her hearing range, it's like her hands are dancing, and that's the enjoyment she gets out of playing those notes. Is there anything like that with you and music?

well, i'm a musician but i really hate dancing. so i don't think necessarily there has to be a connection. although, the bass and drums are kind of cool that way because it does require a little athleticism to play them and sometimes when you get your body more involved you'll feel more inside the music. bob moses, a drummer and one of my teachers at NEC always asks his students to "contour" music as a way of learning it, which basically means flailing your limbs in rhythm to it, picking out the harmonic rhythm, the pulse, each part in a different part of your body. on the other hand, one of my favorite ways to listen to music is in the dark lying down with headphones on. different ways for different kinds of music and different people i guess. it's like chocolate and peanuts. i think they're great together and great apart. but some people don't dig either or both. to each his/her own.

What is the best musical experience you've ever had? The worst?

that's such a hard question. i don't think i could pick either. i mean, i've had some really fun performances in front of big audiences, but i also love just playing guitar and singing for close friends, or just for myself sometimes. when i was in china i would stay up every night until dawn and sit on my balcony playing guitar and it was magical.

i also should mention some really amazing experiences i've had playing through the New England Conservatory outreach ensemble. we play at community centers and schools--a center for the blind, a center for adults with AIDS, adults with developmental disabilities. when people are young or in situations of decreased social pressures, you are really able to perceive the way music touches them. they show it in every pulse, smiles, shouts, singing, dancing. they just love it because it hits them so deeply, and they're not afraid to show you.

Is music ever able to convey an idea better than words? Why?

yes, well, i mean, i like music when there is words to go along. the music deffff gives it a super extra punch. the lyrics should be between poetry and conversation, carefully thought out but not too esoteric. i can't really describe why music makes you feel so amazing, it just does. it's like magic. it's so powerful.

What is your definition of music?

a collection of pitches and rhythms, i guess..? i'm not really into modern classical music, john cage, shit, noise music whatever, but all of those elements can definitely be used in music. they're just taking it to an extreme where i don't enjoy it, and possibly no one can enjoy it. but if that's your bag, i won't stop you.

What is music, beyond sound?

for me it's a whole environment. more powerful than looking in a picture it can take you to a different place, mood, memory, emotion. if you walk around with your ipod on and do the exact same thing, go the exact same places, but with different music, it will be a totally different experience.

Where would you place yourself on this continuum:

Hearing

Deaf

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6-----7-----
-----8

maybe a 2? i mean, i'm not super human or anything, but i hear pretty good.

What is your favorite instrument?

acoustic guitar

What is your favorite musical sound?

i don't really know what you mean by this...? maybe a really subtle whispery voice.

What is your favorite genre of music?

acoustic rock/folk, but only if it's not cheesy

When you hear a symphony, what catches your attention the most?

the harmonic development. i also really enjoy the little percussion parts if they're cute and catchy. the melodic themes.

Are you more of a rhythm or melody listener? Is this a fair question?

well, i think the melody is definitely intended to be this focus by definition. but they rhythm is constantly laying a backdrop, creating the environment, so perhaps it's more important. you could put the same melody in a different rhythm and i think it would sound more different than the same rhythm with a different melody.

What do you like about music beyond what comes through your ears?

what it does to my emotions.

What's the first thing that comes to mind you hear the word music?
musicians. the life. music that i love.

Subject 7

Evelyn Glennie - First and Foremost

Interview by Caryn Havlik

Interview transcript taken from:

<http://www.drummergirl.com/interviews/glennie/glennie.htm> on April 11, 2006.

Name: Evelyn Elizabeth Ann Glennie

Originally From: North of Aberdeen, Scotland

Sign: Cancer

Favorite Colors: Red and purple

Favorite (tour) Food: Italian, although Evelyn has a soft spot for shortbread, Earl Grey tea and chocolate.

Current Bands/Ensembles/Projects: Full time Solo percussionist

Previous Bands/Ensembles/Projects: Full time Solo percussionist

Website: <http://www.evelyn.co.uk>

Discography:

http://www.evelyn.co.uk/acatalog/EG_Merchandise_Recordings_20.html

(15 solo CDs, 3 videos, autobiography "Good Vibrations"), not to mention other records on other labels.

Favorite Beats/Licks/Works/Composers/Drums: Everything!!

Evelyn Glennie is the first and only full-time professional classical percussion soloist. To see Evelyn play is a wonder. This "thrilling, hyperkinetic, wild woman" bangs, caresses, shakes, strokes, strikes, scrapes, and generally beats the tar out of a huge array of all kinds of percussion instruments; congas, vibes, cowbells, cymbals, marimba, her own instrument creations, up to about 60 instruments in any given show (she travels with up to two TONS of gear). By playing barefoot, Evelyn is able to experience the music fully. Her attacks contain a controlled ferocity or an astounding delicacy; her ultra-speed and accuracy can barely be described.

Much media attention has been given to the fact that Evelyn is a deaf musician. Without dwelling on the subject, Drummergirl would like to sum up an essay from Evelyn's site: the general understanding of "deaf" is incorrect. Evelyn is profoundly deaf, and she doesn't feel the need to make a big deal about it. After she lost her hearing when she was young, Evelyn spent a lot of time with her percussion teacher Ron Forbes, refining her ability to detect vibration. She can distinguish the rough pitch of notes by associating where on her body she feels the sound. Truth be told, Evelyn's hearing is something that bothers other people far more than it bothers her. Since she is one of the world's top international musicians, it must not make much of a difference to the orchestras, conductors, or venues.

By the way, Evelyn also plays the bagpipes - the Great Highland pipes, to be exact, with orchestras and in recitals. She even has her own tartan known as "The Rhythms of Evelyn Glennie".

(http://www.tartans.scotland.net/tartan_info.cfm?tartan_id=2590)

She gave the first ever Percussion recital and Percussion concerto in the history of Britain's Royal Academy of Music (the conservatory was founded in 1822), where she studied both piano and percussion. For the first ten years of her career, nearly every performance she gave was in some way a first; the first time an orchestra had performed with a percussion soloist, the world premiere of a new percussion work (written especially for her), the first solo percussion performance at a venue. She gives around 110 concerts per year, and spends up to four months touring in the United States alone.

If that's not impressive enough, Evelyn has received a Grammy, and two further Grammy nominations, plus a Classic CD Award for her solo recordings, of which she has released 13 to date. She has also earned her country's highest honor, as a recipient of the Order of the British Empire, an award that commemorates non-combatant service. She is co-director (along with the National Symphony's Music Director Leonard Slatkin, no less) of a Percussion Festival in Washington DC, which will be expanding to New York City's Carnegie Hall.

She was also the first classical musician to have her own website. (In fact, the Evelyn Glennie company designs web pages for music publishers and technology companies.) It's fitting then, that despite her relentless touring schedule, Evelyn was somehow able to give Drummergirl a moment of her time.

Background

DG: What inspired you to play, and how old were you when you started?

GLENNIE: I started timpani & percussion from the age of 12. Simply curiosity and a very good teacher inspired me.

DG: What did you start out playing? Kit percussion? Marching band? Hand drums?

GLENNIE: I started on xylo, snare drum, 2 hand tuned timpani and a small group of auxiliary instruments.

DG: How did you learn to play?

GLENNIE: I was treated as a musician first and an instrumentalist second. I was always encouraged to use my imagination and constantly deal with music rather than exercises.

DG: What was your first kit/drum/percussive instrument?

GLENNIE: The first thing I was ever given was an extremely cheap snare drum which I still have.

Playing

DG: Do you/Did you ever play kit percussion? If yes, which way do you play -- left- or right-handed?

GLENNIE: Both

DG: Have you ever taken lessons? If so, where? Would you recommend lessons to others?

GLENNIE: I had one teacher from the age of 12 to 16 at school and then I spent 3 years with another teacher at the Royal Academy of Music in London. I would recommend lessons to others but also I would recommend having lessons with harpists, trumpeters, cellists, etc.

DG: What kind of instruments do you play on?

GLENNIE: All sorts. There are so many companies making good products.

DG: How long have you been playing the Great Highland Bagpipes?

GLENNIE: 5 years

DG: What is your favorite style of drums/percussion to play?

GLENNIE: Whatever the music requires, I shall deal with. Therefore all musical dialects are of interest to me.

Evelyn plays all the conventional percussion instruments (the xylophone, marimba, vibraphone, drum kit, snare drum, cymbals, timpani, wood blocks, temple blocks, chimes, cowbells, tambourines, tam tams, gongs) and is also a virtuosic wizard on a wide variety of ethnic instruments (the congas, bongos, timbales, djembes, bodhrans, log drums, gamelan, wind gongs, rain trees, maracas, shakers, guiros, shekeres, pandeiros, claves, steel pan, cup bells, taiko drums). In any one performance, she can be playing up to sixty different instruments which may include flower pots, kitchen utensils and other ordinary objects. Evelyn's got nearly 1400 instruments in her percussion arsenal, including those of her own design: the cymbal tree, pieces of scaffolding, the simtak which is an exhaust pipe played with triangle beaters, "Glennie's Garbage"- her own line of "trashy sounding" cymbals welded from sheet metal are now being marketed by Sabian.

DG: What is your latest instrumental creation?

GLENNIE: An cylindrical organ pipe filled with water that makes an eerie whale like sound. Very interesting and hugely popular with the audience.

DG: To which of your instrument creations are you most attached?

GLENNIE: Probably the Batonka and the Simtak

DG: What kind of sounds do they make?

GLENNIE: The Batonka is 2 octaves of plastic tubes played with paddle type mallets. It creates a "boink" type sound! The Simtak is a huge truck exhaust pipe with a very sharp, tingly resonant sound which I play with triangle sticks.

DG: What are your favorite sticks, mallets, beaters, cymbals, drums?

GLENNIE: All sorts!! All the companies make something special!

DG: Any endorsements? (Hmmm...perhaps your own line of Sabian cymbals?)

GLENNIE: Sabian Cymbals, Evans Drum Heads, Pro Mark Sticks and several recommendations such as Malletech Marimbas, Page Drums, Grover products, etc.

DG: How often do you get a chance to play with rock bands, folk groups, Gamelan Orchestras, jazz bands, Latin ensembles, taiko circles, Indian classical musicians?

GLENNIE: My speciality is solo percussion but I have collaborated with the likes of Bjork, Kodo Drummers, Nana Vasconcelos, Classical Ballet Dancers, Gamelan Groups, Steve Hackett, etc, etc.

Evelyn most recently received a Grammy Award for Perpetual Motion, a collaboration with banjo player Béla Fleck. She has performed with Gamelan orchestras in Indonesia and Samba bands in Brazil, including work with the Brazilian percussionist and vocalist, Nana Vasconcelos (<http://www.ejn.it/mus/vasconce.htm>) . Evelyn maintains an ongoing collaboration with Icelandic singer, Björk; together they have composed and recorded several pieces, and Evelyn has appeared in Björk's video on MTV Unplugged.

Works, Roles and Models

DG: Who are your current musical favorites?

GLENNIE: Maxim Vengerov the violinist, Terry Bozzio, the traditional Irish group The Chieftains, Bela Fleck the Banjo player and so many others, not to mention sports people, business people, etc.

DG: Major influences?

GLENNIE: Jacqueline du Pré [cellist], Glenn Gould [pianist].

DG: Name your favorite percussionist and describe his/her best qualities.

GLENNIE: There are too many to just pick one! As long as an individual can express him or herself in an honest way then I am happy! There are so many wonderful players.

DG: What do you believe a percussionist's role is in an ensemble/orchestra? What do you believe the drummer's role is in a band?

GLENNIE: In both cases sensitivity, understanding of the whole picture, creativity, flexibility, reliability, and of course great musicianship.

DG: Are there many works written for percussion soloists, (aside from the hundred or so new works you've commissioned from contemporary composers)? Have you written anything for solo percussion?

GLENNIE: I have written small pieces for marimba and in my personal library I have nearly 3000 pieces listed for solo percussion.

Loading questions

DG: Do you ever go into drum stores? Were you ever intimidated in a drum store?

GLENNIE: I go to stores whenever I can. No, I have never been intimidated.

DG: Well, since you've obviously got a lot of equipment to transport (up to 2 tons for each performance), how do you get it around? How do you carry all your equipment?

GLENNIE: I have my own technician with back up techs when required. I transport everything in my truck in western Europe for which I have several duplicates of instruments within the UK. I fly the instruments when performing further afield. In the USA I have another set of instruments based there, for which I normally have them travel by road in a hired truck but sometimes they fly, depending on the concert schedule.

Note: It takes on average 4 hours to set up the instruments Evelyn plays in any one gig and an average of 2 hours to strip them all down after the performance.

Touring and Performance

DG: Do you have any touring stories you'd like to tell us?

GLENNIE: No! Touch wood, we have been hassle free which is amazing considering the amount of concerts given.

DG: How long were you playing before you knew this was the thing for you?

GLENNIE: I knew when I was 15 years old that I wanted to be a soloist. Therefore, I had been playing for about 2.5 years.

DG: How long were you playing before you played a recital/concert/gig?

GLENNIE: I played concerts at school during my first year of playing.

DG: What's it like playing with top orchestras?

GLENNIE: Great! I love concerto work as each orchestra has very much its own character and ways of delivery.

DG: What was it like working with Kodo? Bjork? Michael Daugherty? Leonard Slatkin? The Black Dyke Band?

GLENNIE: All great experiences - character building is what I would call it! One has to keep a completely open mind at all times. It's just wonderful having all these experiences and sharing them with truly great musicians.

Note: Evelyn loves to travel on motorbikes and passed her full motorcycle test in January of 2001. Also, the one thing Evelyn never leaves home without (no, not American Express), other than her instruments, is her Gameboy.

Practice

DG: How do you find time to practice when you're on tour?

GLENNIE: That's hard. I simply carry a little pad with me but most of the time the practice happens in my head. Visualization plays a huge part in my development as I do not get to my instruments very often.

DG: Do you have any tuning tips?

GLENNIE: No, other than keep experimenting. Try every combination possible and truly EXPERIENCE the sound. Pick what is right for the piece of music or situation you are dealing with. My tuning varies quite considerably.

DG: How did you improve your speed and accuracy?

GLENNIE: Play freely and without strain. Nothing should feel unnatural and do not push things unnecessarily. Go with the flow of your body and constantly think of quality of sound. The speed will come in its own natural way.

More about EVELYN

DG: You are the first ever, and still the only full-time solo percussionist in the field of classical music. Did you ever have a day job?

GLENNIE: No!

DG: What resources (stores, books, teachers, magazines, etc.) do you recommend?

GLENNIE: Any type of book and magazine you can lay your hands on. I get most of my ideas from the most unlikely sources, hence why I read non-musical books.

DG: What have you been reading lately?

GLENNIE: Conversations with God by Neale Walsch. He has written 3 books under this title. Very interesting read.

DG: What was the greatest compliment you've been given about your playing?

GLENNIE: It's encouraging when a very seasoned orchestral player comments on my musicianship. He/she has seen a lot of musicians come and go as soloists and so it is special to be commented on purely on musicianship.

DG: What are your goals as a percussionist?

GLENNIE: To always find something interesting around the corner and to be sure that as many people (young and old) get to experience the power of sound through percussion.

DG: So, when you were a teenager, you wanted to be a hairdresser. What would you be doing if you weren't a percussionist?

GLENNIE: I would be a visual artist and no doubt a jewelry designer too, using I think all sorts of materials including scrap material. I would be totally open in the same way I make instruments from all sorts of materials.

Subject 8
"John"
Tuesday, May 2, 2006

I WANTED TO START OUT BY KIND OF GETTING A PICTURE OF MUSIC IN YOUR LIFE. THESE ARE THE QUESTIONS I WANTED TO START WITH. SO, WHAT IS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF MUSIC?

Piano lessons, 1949.

WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

1945. I was four and Mrs. Robinson was very beautiful and it was summertime. It was quite warm in the summertime so she had to take off her jacket, beautiful shoulders. And I guess I remember playing the piano and liking it. And that's what a lot of people say, my first piano teacher I was in love with her. Or my first piano teacher, all I had to do was play all the notes and I got a candy bar so I think it's often a seduction, intentional or unintentional.

SO YOU STARTED PLAYING THE PIANO, AND YOU STARTED PLAYING THE CELLO AT WHAT AGE?

Nope, never played the cello. Piano at 4. This is an injury from when I was 18 months old and my uncle was a plastic surgeon and he looked at this and said, "you know, the guys who did this operation, they are probably pretty proud of themselves." This is 1946, there is no such thing as hand surgery in 1946. So they put it together but this is as far down as this finger will go so no violin for this guy and the hyperextension is backwards. And my mother noted that this finger was raw every morning and so they realized that there was nerve damage, they went back in and put the nerves together, but I have lost most of the tissue on this, and this and this too so no violin. So the doctor said, "well, piano, it will help him regain his manual digital dexterity." So the piano was occupational therapy. Piano at 4, clarinet at 10, summer band and because of this finger and because of the a flat key on the clarinet and because I was in a group situation, I was like "oh, I can't really do that" so I played the clarinet backwards. And that worked for the first week and then the conductor looked at me and said, "what are you doing?" and I said, I can't do this so I play like this. And she said, "no, you have to do it right." So I learned that you had to do it right and then I started singing in choruses, I had been singing in church but I was singing in choruses at Putney School in 1959 age 14 and they had compulsory singing, compulsory Friday night singing and singing also on Sunday night at meeting. He had very good taste, the music teacher, we sang Bach, we sang Mozart, and rounds, we sang Gilbert Sullivan. They took attendance and you had to be there. And so I discovered that I could sing, and I sang in the performing chorus my senior year and when I got to Harvard I was principal clarinet in the orchestra there, when I got to Harvard there were no orchestral openings so I signed up for the band and I only lasted through football season and one rehearsal of concert band and I realized that no, no I'm not a band player. And I was singing in Harvard University Choir at the church and Harvard Glee Club with Elliot Phillips, the late Elliot Phillips he just passed away and in '64 I started conducting. The guy who ran the Harvard University Choir said "if you want to conduct, why don't you come by 45 minutes early, we do this every year,

come by once a week.” I got my little anthem and practiced it on the piano and I stood up in front of the group and they all laughed and I asked why and one of the altos said, it’s always the altos, “We can’t possibly sing if you are going to stare at us like that!” and that was the beginning. And I thought, “how am I going to make this happen?” because I really liked conducting, you know it’s terminal, conducting... and Harvard has an orchestra called the Bach Society which is conducted by an undergraduate, it’s been around for 50 years and it was younger then and I thought I want to conduct that when I’m a senior. How am I going to get there from the chorus? I know, I’m going to put on an opera. So Harvard is the kind of place where you just put one foot in front of the other and you just say I want to put on an opera. They have all these undergraduate theatrical, musical productions spring and fall there is a whole mechanism there to be accessed so my roommates and I decided that we were going to do this and Archie Epps who was the tutor in Leveritt House said, “I hope you’ll do it in Leveritt House.” So he was African American, I’m African American and it meant a lot to have a guy watching your back and he was literally watching our backs. He came to every rehearsal. What to do? That summer I was on the North American Tour of the Harvard Glee Club and as we were headed for CA Tanglewood chorus said they needed sopranos and tenors and as we were coming back through Canada they said they needed altos and basses and I stuck up my hand and went to Tanglewood. And I was rooming with another guy from Glee Club and I asked him, “what should we do? Which opera should we do?” Well Tosca’s nice and you know Harvard guys, how about Dionioneous (?) yes... that might be fun. How about Von Tute (?), that has a lot of ensembles that might be easier, little did we know. But I went back home and the preacher preached a sermon, “aim for the stars and if you miss you are still on high ground.” And it felt that he was speaking directly to me. So I said “Coze Von Tute (?) it is!” so we did that December 2,3 5 and 6, 1964 and I’ve never looked back. I went to Stanford and that’s where I started taking Bass lessons, because I figured I needed to understand how the strings worked and that was the only thing I could deal with, with my hand. So I took some bass lessons and in ’67 I was with Nadia Boulanger at the Fontainebleau outside of Paris. I met a lot of good kids, some from Julliard and they said, “why are you at Stanford? You should come to Julliard!” So I asked Mme to give me a letter, she gave me a letter, and also a letter from Susanne Bloch, who was the daughter of Ernst Bloch, French Swiss, not German, and she helped me with my prep for my Julliard audition and I got in in 1968 and I moved to Julliard and I can tell you more anecdotal stuff, but jumping to one of your questions, music has defined my life. From really the age of 19 until now, it has all been “what is best for *the conducting*.” And I’m late deaf, this is sudden sensorineural hearing loss, 2004, so that’s occasioned a change, and it’s been a bummer, I’ve had good support from my wife, from healthcare professionals, from my friends, and so what I’m figuring is I had a good run. I had a 42 year run, I need to figure out what my second act is going to be.

I’M REALLY INTERESTED IN THE TRANSITION SURROUNDING 2004.

So am I!

IF YOU ARE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT IT...

Certainly! What do you want to know?

WHAT WAS THE FIRST THING THAT YOU STARTED TO NOTICE?

Oh it was literally just a flash. I woke up, I didn't feel so good, I thought I was coming down with a cold and I thought it was, I went to dinner, walking home, I thought it must have been lousy wine or something, so I went to bed and the next morning I woke up and I just couldn't hear and I thought my ears were stuffed up so I took an antihistamine and inhaled some steam and went about my business and that wasn't working so I took another antihistamine and breathed some more steam and we were having lunch and I thought I had better go to the doctor. So I went to the doctor's office and my wife said she would come with me. So I went to the ENT and he was in surgery and so they sent me to the Emergency Room at Mass Eye and Ear and I said I think I have stopped up eustachian tubes or wax on the eardrum so they looked in my ears and said no it's not your tubes and your eardrum is fine, you need a hearing test. I said, I know I can't hear! He said, we need to know what's going on. So, I had the hearing test and they gave me temporary hearing aids, loaners, and I bought these guys, they're Phonacs, and we began the second act. I was floored, the first thing that happened was we had just moved into this place and I meditate every morning and when things get really bad sometimes you just start crying in the middle of your meditation and I was upstairs sobbing quietly and my wife came up, I wasn't bawling or anything, put her arm around me and I said "we're going to have to sell the house" That was what I thought about, the first thing. And she said "we're going to figure out what we're going to do." So we hid, we hid all summer, we thought if we didn't tell anyone we could figure out what we were going to do. We went to Virginia hiding, hiding from the people in Ohio and hiding from the orchestra here and then, trying to get used to the hearing aids. One of the boxes you check off when you get hearing aids is "beginner, intermediate or experienced user" I thought what does that mean? I now know that it is an entire voyage of discovery, hearing aids, and everyone has their idiosyncrasies and mine is that I sweat a lot. And we didn't address that right away. They just gave me those little crystals that you put in the microwave. And what I have now, as you can see, are the sweat bands and I have the electric dryer and I also have the rubber guys that you slip over it and because I sweat a lot, you have to keep the water out of them. So it took me a year to learn about that and then you have to get the volume right and the feedback I want more volume, and there is more feedback... and my ear canals are straight and it's better if they are crooked so the thing will catch. If it is straight, the hearing aid will keep sliding in and out so that was a problem. Donna Hultman, whom you know perhaps, she really gets a prize. She has really stuck by me and I'm really grateful and she deserves the complement. I cannot tell you how many hours I have spent at Mass Eye and Ear, how many hours they have spent on me just trying to get the damn things to work. The big breakthrough came via the telephone, because the telephone is a big problem and that little thing that they sell at Radio Shack, the little square thing you put on the telephone, that's actually very wonderful. And it works quite well and Marilyn Electronics (?) they're terribly nice too, I got from them my second amplifying telephone, because the first one was just terrible, and expensive, but it just didn't work, but this one it has really good fidelity. And you can of course just put a speakerphone up to your ear... but the telephone was the trickiest thing to negotiate, because once I could talk on the telephone, I could pretend that nothing was wrong.

YOU TALK ABOUT SOME OF THE MECHANICAL DIFFICULTIES OF GETTING HEARING AIDS, WITH THE SWEAT AND THE ADAPTATIONS YOU HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH THAT WAY, WHAT ABOUT HEARING, WHAT ABOUT SOUND, WHAT YOUR BRAIN IS PERCEIVING COMPARED TO WHAT IT USED TO?

Yeah, well it's um... "nothing can bring back the hour of splendor in the grass or the glory in the flower we will breathe not the feather find strength in what is left behind," Wordsworth. So my manager, my lifelong manager said I had to listen to all my records. So I listened to a lot of records. It was painful, it sounded distorted like the radio was between stations, I tried everything, I tried taking off the hearing aids and putting my ear right up to the speaker, but in fact, there is damage and the perception is compromised. So it will never come back. They gave me steroids, I took some anti-virals and then a long course of acupuncture, I'm still doing that, and the acupuncture is actually helping, and in this sense, some of the phase shift, it's right about 440 Hz it shifted up an augmented second, three seconds, everything above there was transposed which means that the music sounded like bad Schoenberg or bad Prokofiev, a better analogy, the horizontal made no sense and the vertical was cacophonous. It was excruciating. But you listen anyway and you go, "ok, I can hear ensemble, I can hear attacks, therefore, I can hear sounds starting and stopping, you can hear style, you can hear balance" It's every brass player's nightmare, even with his hearing aids in he's telling us that we're too loud! And it's true, you can hear that stuff, and then of course your brain kicks in and it says pizzicatos have been rushing since the beginning of time so you know that the pizzas are rushing and that the basses have been dragging since the beginning of time now I can't hear basses, and that's partly due to the hearing aids, they don't have the range to go down to where basses are because speech doesn't happen at those frequencies. And that's caused me some problem. I've been able to hear chords more accurately, I can hear harmonies now.

CAN YOU IDENTIFY THEM? LIKE THAT'S A C MAJOR OR A D MINOR?

Oh, I've never had pitch recognition. But I can identify the genre and the voice leading, many times I feel I have to conduct like this [looking down] because I find that I can't always get back on right away, when you can hear the music exactly as it's being played you lose your place, you know where to go but I can't lose my place because sometimes you don't want to be off, you don't want to spend five measures figuring out which measure you are in and I can't always figure out which measure we are in. Timbre was troublesome, still is. Directionality is virtually impossible. The old line that the symbol player is frustrated and plays in the middle of a passage and the conductor asks "who did that!?" I had been losing high frequency before; piccolo kind of sheared off the high frequencies in the 70's, there was an angry piccolo player, my ear was ringing as it did with rock concerts in those days, but it didn't stop. So I went to the otolaryngologist and they gave me steroids and the tech said, "it shears off the cilia, they never grow back, it's gone for good" and then I was doing Bernstein's Chalil (?) with a flute player in Australia and small room and very loud and it hit a very high note and I said "oooo wow, you're going to ruin my hearing!" and he said, "oh, I lost mine years ago..." and I thought thanks!

I'M ALSO REALLY CURIOUS ABOUT YOUR SENSE AS A MUSICIAN, AND I HAVE A FEW QUESTIONS HERE ABOUT HOW YOU PREPARE FOR A PERFORMANCE AND WHAT YOU ARE THINKING ABOUT BEFORE A PERFORMANCE WHAT YOU ARE TRYING TO CONVEY AND WHETHER THAT IS PURELY IN THE ARENA OF SOUND OR WHETHER IT BRIDGES INTO MOTION OR VIBRATION OR TOUCH OR PHYSICAL MOVEMENT THAT IS MORE DANCE LIKE. DOES THAT PLAY A ROLE IN YOUR LIFE?

You know, late deaf is a very different situation. My daughter is actually very interested, she has an associate's degree in manual communication. This is independent of my infirmity and she is certified ASL and she works, she's written her Harvard Bachelor's Thesis on language acquisition in toddlers, deaf toddlers. She said, "you are late deaf and that makes a big difference." Because my affect is that of a hearing person and so I don't have the characteristic tentative quality of people who have been deaf all their life. I have been trying to get back to my set point. The big breakthrough came with the telephone and one problem was when I was using the telephone. There is a setting on the hearing aid called Acoustic Telephone. Which is a setting which is as loud as possible and I noticed that a certain number of people don't annunciate their consonants. Their parents might have for whatever reason allowed them to speak indistinctly. But I found when I turned the hearing aids to Acoustic Telephone I could hear some people who had been mumbling before. My son mumbles, it's just a factor of who he is, he's 25, how old are you?

23.

My oldest daughter is 23... he mumbles, I found I could hear him better on Acoustic Telephone. I had her turn both onto Acoustic Telephone and when I did Vivaldi Four Seasons that I could hear. I could hear the whole thing. I have to be careful with that because that is a lot of volume and so if there are any brass players I can't do it with brass players around. The analogy I use is that I'm kind of like Terminator. I can see the outline, I can see the skeletons, when you reach for your gun, I can see you reaching for your gun, but I no longer see Jay sitting there, musically you know, I have all the outlines, my ears provide much of the outline, my brain provides much of the outline, but there is a significant component that is missing and it ain't the same. Which is why I'm packing it in. You know, I thought, maybe I could be the Evelyn Glennie of the podium. I think Evelyn isn't completely deaf, she's mostly deaf, and she doesn't make this distinction, but I've worked with her once and she can hear some stuff. You call her and she kind of turns her head and knows someone is calling her. I don't really know how deaf she is. I thought I could be the Evelyn Glennie of the podium, I could let my managers know that please let it be known that I am deaf and I am doing this with hearing aids. But I thought no, my whole reason for doing this was the totality of the music. And it just isn't there anymore, and also, as a conductor, you are a servant. Your job is to make it work for the orchestra. And we did Medias Meditations, a Samuel Barber piece, and it has a piano part to it and it has a complicated string part with it, it's very hard to hear down there and I had to work a long time to get the strings to do it right. I got the strings right but the soloist went into piano land and so she didn't notice the small discrepancy between what she was counting off of my beat and what the strings were doing off of my beat. And she, I don't know what she did, but I couldn't hear it. And so I conducted what I did, but I knew she wasn't with me. Like any situation, you keep going, hoping for a fermata on the next page, and the wind players came in and then we coalesced around the people who could hear. And I thought, no I can't do this, I can do fine as long as everything is OK, but I can't, I'm no good at getting people out of a jam. Now, very often, you as a conductor can't get them out of a jam, they have to get themselves out of a jam, but that's no consolation when you know things are really crucial and you can't supply the missing link. I have about 10 minutes...

I WANT TO TALK ABOUT HOW YOU WOULD ENVISION GETTING A COCHLEAR IMPLANT AND WHAT THAT WOULD DO...

Oh, I'm not going to do it. This helps me, this uses what I got, and it breaks down periodically, sometimes it just breaks down. For a cochlear implant, you have to sacrifice what you got, so no cochlear implants for this cookie.

WHAT DOES YOUR BRAIN DO MUSICALLY IF YOU TURN YOUR HEARING AIDS OFF? WHAT GOES ON IN YOUR BRIAN?

Oh it's all there! I was singing as I was coming home today, because it's all there, and it's all beautifully in tune. That's actually the nicest part. And the feeling is all there, the feeling can sort of be there, I was doing _____ last week and the tingles were still there, the magic of the silence was still there that 6/8 time, the tingles were still there. Now, how much of that was being supplied on the spot and how much of it was just the recollection, it's hard to know, but the tingles were still there. And it's my last season at Youngstown, and I thought it's too bad, I've done the same pieces I've done my whole life, just kind of saying goodbye, I thought, shit, I should have done something else. They say junior conductors only get one rehearsal, it's terrible for them because they are doing their best but they only get one rehearsal, and then you get to be the music director and you get your 4 rehearsals and you start doing pieces three times, the third time is when you finally figure out how a piece works the physics of the piece, and you asked about approach, I'll circle back to that, so pieces like Firebird I know how they work, I know how to make it happen, I believe in metronome marks, I've become a great believer in metronome marks, uh, they're smart, composers, they are a lot smarter than most of us shmucks who try and... so I've become a great believer in metronome marks and my default position is how to make it work with the string players. So it's really too bad, but nobody ever died with an empty inbox, you always have stuff that you wish you could do, it's really too bad because I now understand the pieces I've been doing my whole life. But as for approach, I think style is very important, I think ensemble is very important, I think intonation is very important, balance is very important, transparency. I like to be able to hear what I am seeing on the page and all fortissimos are not created equal. When the tuba plays fortissimo and the flute plays fortissimo in the low range, who is going to win? But the composer just writes fortissimo for everybody. So it's our job to balance it.

SO, GOING BACK TO THE QUESTION, AS A CONDUCTOR DO YOU TRY TO CONVEY ANYTHING BEYOND SOUND?

Phrasing? Is phrasing sound? Yeah...

THAT'S UP TO YOU...

Yeah, sometimes it helps the colleagues to know what's going on, what did you say? You've had one view of music for 18 years? And the thing about a conductor, being a conductor is an encyclopedic profession so we immerse ourselves in these pieces and I once said to my daughter, when she was doing Meistersinger Overture I said, she's a violinist, would you like to see the score and listen to a recording? "Oh no, it's ok daddy, I have a bowed part" That's a teenager's approach, that's often a musician's approach too, they have louder softer,

when to break, and so they kind of mail it in. Unless you can galvanize them, when you do a great piece you start telling a story. You hear integrity in the music. When you sell it to them by telling a story, you can get a more galvanized performance.

SO A NON-SOUND BASED IMAGE CAN DRAMATICALLY INFLUENCE WHAT SOUND PEOPLE PRODUCE?

It's a language, so it has to have content. It can be about itself, but the notion that music is about itself is a nineteenth century notion. And prior to that, music had always to be about something. And the goddamn tonally moving forms. And we started turning up our nose at Franz List and Tchaikovsky, because it had a program, well it always had a program, all this music that had tonally moving forms, it had a program too, but they were kind of transparent forms and we didn't realize that.

[DISCUSSION NOT RELEVANT TO THE INTERVIEW]

I'M REALLY INTERESTED IN THIS IDEA OF HEARING BEYOND SOUND AND AS A CONDUCTOR YOU HAVE ALLUDED TO THESE IMAGES AND THIS WAY OF GUIDING A GROUP OF MUSICIANS TO DO SOMETHING AND WHAT ABOUT.

.....

CONTINUUM QUESTION

We become metaphysical! Five, six, and seven, five with the hearing aids, seven without. I am defining that... my wife has to touch my ear with her nose for me to hear her, she can speak normally, but she has to be that close. I can hear certain things, like my alarm clock, for example, so it ain't great, more like 7 than 8, if someone blows their horn at me and I don't have my hearing aids in, I know to get out of the way, so I'm a lucky guy in that respect.

ARE YOU EQUAL IN BOTH EARS?

Yeah, that's why Michael McKenna (?) at Mass Eye and Ear, say it balances bilaterally, it's anomalous. It's probably genetic for it to do this. Perhaps everyone who was going to go deaf in my family late in life was already dead? Sometimes a genetic proclivity can be provoked by an event. It's possible that something did this to me in that way. Anyway, how am I defining it? With the hearing aids I'm about... yeah... yeah... we don't have any problem right now, we're about 3 feet apart. If you turned away, I would no longer hear what you are saying.

DO YOU LIP READ?

Oh god yes! I am not trained, but yes, definitely. I'm not sure if it's the lips or if it's the directionality or if it's just that a person is trying to communicate with me and not some inanimate object.

I GUESS MY QUESTION, MY LAST ONE, IS WHAT IS THE LEAST SOUND-BASED MUSIC EXPERIENCE YOU HAVE EVER HAD?

I don't know, it's too hard to answer that question, but I think about music all the time! So as you know, it plays up here. Put that one on the too hard pile.

WHAT'S THE BEST MUSICAL EXPERIENCE YOU'VE EVER HAD?

Probably conducting Mahler 8.

THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR TIME. I REALLY ENJOYED THE CONVERSATION. IF YOU ARE ABLE TO SEND ME THE ANSWERS TO SOME OF THE OTHER QUESTIONS, I WOULD BE VERY GRATEFUL.

{the following are responses sent via email, pasted verbatim}

- Earliest memory: Of actual music, playing hymns at Grandmother's
- Choosing piano: Parents did it when I was 4 yrs old. Choosing conducting—the first time I did it at age 19, I was hooked for life
- Does instrument complement: being a conductor does, actually. I like people, and I like moving to music
- Musical influences: Maria Luisa Faini (piano professor, Eastman School)—keen sense of balance; Leonard Bernstein—vivacity and intellectual scope
- Favorites: Daphnis & Chloe; Afternoon of a Faun; La Mer; Beethoven 9; Mahler 1, 2, 4, 8, Das Lied. Don't like country music
- Life without music: unimaginable
- Concentrate on: the work in question; ensemble; balance; intonation; style
- Try to convey: a sense of the work as I feel that the composer heard it
- Preparation: nap and a light meal beforehand; minimal contact with others
- Affect life: virtually every decision I have made since age 21 has been governed by its influence on my conducting
- Best musical experience: toss-up between Beethoven 9, Mahler 2, Mahler 8. Worst: a couple of Royal Ballet performances (an *Ondine* [Henze]; an "Arab Dance" [*The Nutcracker*])
- Better able to convey idea: sometimes—it depends on the idea
- What is music: the movement of sound in time
- Beyond sound: the language of feeling (although only by imperfect analogy a language)
- Why do you consider yourself a musician: I've have actively loved it for 57 years, and I have spent the last 38 years doing it professionally
- Continuum: 5/6 with hearing aids; 6/7 without
- Unasked question: favorite composer or style period. (Point of information: are we operating exclusively within the purview of Western art music?)
- Favorite instrument: piano
- Favorite sound: antique cymbal
- Favorite genre: Western art; within that, symphonic
- Catches your attention: if I know the piece, the performance; if I don't know the piece, the work itself
- Rhythm v. melody: probably rhythm—hate performers with lousy rhythm. (Sure it's a fair question!)
- Beyond what comes through ears: how it makes you feel. It's cheesecake for the brain, gratifying so many regions—cognitive, emotional, analytic, sensual to name a few
- First thing you think of: C major chord on the piano—c, e, g, starting with middle c

- Interact with the body: depends on the music. Lyrical music activates the hands, and makes me want to sing; a lot of stuff makes me conduct, though (natch). If I were a better dancer, rhythmic music would probably activate the feet and the body at large
- Cochlear implant: unsure how it would sound. I just know that, periodically, my hearing aids desert me; I suspect that a cochlear implant would do likewise
- If you became deaf: Actually, I am deaf. What is coming through the ears is incomplete, corrupted, and occasionally out of tune. Over the last 2 years, the brain has adapted to the new reality. When I hear a piece I know, my brain fills in the blanks; hearing a piece I don't know is hazardous, since I never develop a complete sense of how the piece should sound. In my head, of course, everything that I knew or learned before June '04 still sounds as beautiful as ever.
- How would deaf musicians approach: haven't a clue. Depends on how deaf they are, what kind of music it is, how much training they've had, what level they wish to perform at
- Would becoming deaf: I won't be conducting much longer
- Whistle or hum: hate folks who whistle—it's highly intrusive and self-indulgent, and usually sharp. I hum and sing all the time, sometimes silently, sometimes under my breath, sometimes (in solitude) aloud
- Do you compose: didn't get the gene
- Glennie's quote: don't find it very interesting

Subject 9
"Barbara"
Wednesday, April 19, 2006

SO BARBARA, THE FIRST QUESTION I HAVE... WHAT WAS YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF MUSIC?

Of hearing?

OF MUSIC.

That's a good question, I remember the first time I heard words when I got my hearing aids when I was 7 years old, but music, when I had my hearing aids I was able to hear 60's music on the radio, I don't know if that was the first time I heard music, but that's what I remember. Also, with that, my parents had a stereo that I listened to, but I never heard the lyrics from that, just vibrations and drums etc.

AND DO YOU REMEMBER...

Oh *The Sound of Music*! Incidentally I remember having my hearing aid, it was my first movie that I remember and I remember the music from that film and looking up at my mother to read her lips when she sang the words to the songs in the film. And I heard the music and the vibration in the movie theatre. That is probably my favorite memory.

THANK YOU. WHAT INSTRUMENT DO YOU PLAY? DO YOU PLAY AN INSTRUMENT?

I don't play conventional music. Or read sheet music, but I love the guitar and I love the piano but I more than anything, I love the violin but I don't play the violin.

SO YOU DO PLAY THE PIANO AND THE GUITAR?

Yes.

OK, AND ACTUALLY, I DON'T KNOW YOUR PROFESSION. WHAT IS YOUR PROFESSION?

Well, I'm not, I'm... ever since I got my cochlear implant, I am a writer, that's very important to me. I was composing music for awhile, but I stopped doing it because I lost my sight. Um, and the music, should be... I lost my hearing briefly in early 2000, so I was without sight and hearing suddenly, it was so fast, um... my... when I asked for my cochlear implant... Sound is different. Right now I can hear high notes very clearly, which I couldn't hear before I lost my hearing briefly, when I wore a hearing aid, I heard low sounds, but not the high notes. To me the low sounds were very comforting, more engaging, so now I can hear all 88 keys of my keyboard, but to hear very low sounds I have to turn up the volume and feel the vibration, so it's different.

CAN YOU BRIEFLY WALK ME THROUGH THE STAGES OF YOUR HEARING AND YOUR SIGHT IN YOUR LIFE?

I had sight most of my life, but I had tunnel vision, I could read books clearly, I could see print, I saw paintings, I saw many many things, I did photography. But as a child the first thing I can remember is that I didn't know that I had a hearing loss. I was deaf, I didn't know. I thought what I was hearing is what everybody else was hearing so I never, until I was in the 3rd grade, when I had a hearing test, and everyone raised their hand and I said why are you raising your hand, what are you doing? I couldn't figure it out. So the audiologist, asked me if I could hear anything and I didn't even know what he was asking, I went to Boston for a hearing test and that's when they discovered that I had moderate hearing loss in both ears. So after I had my hearing tested, my brother and sister found out that they had the same thing. It was sensorineural hearing loss. I started having night blindness when I was 13 and when I was 14 I was diagnosed with *retinitis pigmentosa*.

WHAT KIND OF HEARING LOSS DID YOU HAVE?

In the 60s they called it sensorineural hearing loss.

GOING BACK TO MUSIC, WHY HAVE YOU CHOSEN TO PLAY THE GUITAR AND THE PIANO?

The funny thing is, before my hearing aids, before I knew that I had anything wrong, I was given a piano, I don't remember how old I was, but I remember playing the piano but I didn't hear it. I don't have any auditory memory of it. I remember loving it. From there on, I think it was, my friend had a guitar, I loved the sound and I wanted one so badly because I loved the sound, there was something nourishing about playing it, something soothing about playing the guitar, the low sounds of the strings, it was just comforting.

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL ABOUT THE PIANO OF THE GUITAR THAT COMPLEMENTS BARBARA?

It's sort of like my external self, another sense of yourself. There is something about the kind of sound that you create. It's not about reading the sheet music and playing what everyone else is playing, I hate the sheet music that you can buy in the store and play what everyone else is playing. I couldn't stand that, I always wanted to play my own thing and do my own thing. But hearing it the way I wanted to hear it, the way I felt it was dependent on how I felt it.

AND HOW DID YOU FEEL IT?

It's interesting, I think your best music pours out of you when you are either in terrible pain or in terrible love. I think either one of those emotions can totally bring music to you. Once you get going it just comes to you.

WHO ARE YOUR MUSICAL INFLUENCES?

That's hard to pinpoint, just one, I don't like rap, and I don't like a lot of loud things, I'm not making judgments, I would say that the kind of music I like is "newage-y" but I also like, I just like some music, Joni Mitchell etc. My mind is kind of at a blank. Oh my god. Carole King, that kind of music. Her music has lots of low sounds, it has a bass guitar if you listen to her music, *Way Over the Blue Yonder*, *You've Got a Friend in Me* they all have low sounds. A lot of people appreciate music, not just for the music, but also for the lyrics. Some of the poetry is just very powerful. But I kind of like the create your own thing.

WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE PIECES?

Like classical music?

WHATEVER YOU FEEL LIKE.

Um... you know I do love, I do listen to opera. There was a song that I saw in a movie once, it was so amazing, I just had to have the recording after I saw it. The soprano was amazing. You know, I just really like music.

HOW WOULD YOU IMAGINE YOUR LIFE WITHOUT MUSIC?

Well I can hear half way through... [recording inaudible]

ARE YOU A PERFORMER, HAVE YOU PERFORMED?

Not really, I've had other people perform music that I've written. Three students from the Berklee School of Music. And I have a CD with three pieces of music that I've composed, and I really like the recording studio, I would love to go back. It's one place that I feel independent where I can make poetry. And to be able to tell people how you hear the music in your head, is it's extremely difficult when you don't know how to write music. And that was really hard, but fortunately I had one woman, her name was Nura, she was excellent, she had a great voice, I recorded music from my keyboard, part of being a musician for me is being able to hear the music in my head more than I can play it on an instrument. It's not like I play songs from beginning to end, I play bits, notes on my keyboard and guitar, whatever, and I put it on tape, and I give the tape to Nura, and then I would explain what she was hearing, explaining the instruments I wanted to hear, exactly what I was hearing in my head, not necessarily what was on the tape. So we have the 8 musicians and magically she was able to translate exactly what I had in my head. Once I heard it, it was the most wonderful feeling because everyone plays what I couldn't hear, it felt great! It was great but then I stopped because I lost my hearing and now it's just, I want to go back to it, very much so. The emotions about the music are the same, the feelings are still there. And I still have the same things in my mind. When I couldn't hear anything I could still hear the keyboard in my head, I would practice with my fingers and it was almost like I could hear it in my head. And you know, I understand when others say they create music from their head.

WHEN YOU EXPERIENCE OTHER MUSICIANS PERFORMING, WHAT DO YOU CONCENTRATE ON?

Um... when I hear others play? That's a good question, because unlike before with just a hearing aid, um, with a cochlear implant, it's really two different sides of hearing, um... now I concentrate on, what's interesting with the implant is that I hear lyrics. And that's really a big part of music. I *never*, before I had my hearing loss, could hear the lyrics. What's interesting, for example when I hear Carole King, I could hear all the words, before I only heard/felt the vibrations, I couldn't hear the high sounds. So hearing it for the first time, the high notes and lyrics, it was a first for me. It's not complete now, because I don't really hear the low sounds, other than vibration. When I listen to music now, I can hear the violin, where I couldn't before. I love Pachabell's *Canon*. In the beginning it was complicated to listen to multiple things at the same time, you really have to listen to one instrument at a time and at first I was so impatient, but it takes time. It took me one year to increase from 25% recognition to 35% to 45% to 60% to 62%. Now it's at 70%. It does fluctuate because I have Meniere's Disease.

DO YOU CONSIDER BEING ABLE BEING ABLE TO HEAR WITH YOUR EARS NECESSARY FOR MUSIC?

Um... in other words are you saying it's important to be able to hear music with your hearing?

YEAH.

No, I don't because... not at all. Because when I didn't have hearing at all, in many ways I felt like I created more music than when I did have hearing. And I can't really explain how or why that is. I remember humming the music and saying, "I know I'm going to do this when I get my hearing back." And I kept humming it and humming it and sure enough, I had a violinist and a singer play one piece that I had heard that year. I just love to hum and then to hear a violin play it. It was really neat. I hummed the song and then wrote it down and then did the lyrics. And it was exactly how I heard it. That's just an example. But, if I could be you know, one of the reasons I [becomes inaudible] one of the things that became the most challenging for me was, when I had a hearing aid I would lip read when I had sight. And I had my sight until about 5 or 6 years ago, whatever, and before that time I was a good lip reader, and when I lost the ability to lip read and then my sight, I can't tell you how excruciating it was to have to listen without lip reading. To listen to words. When I first got my implant, I couldn't understand any music, I couldn't decipher any note, any sound, let alone lyrics or words. I just couldn't get anything. So I listened to National Public Radio daily, every single day, to try and, I thought I was going to lose it, I couldn't go anywhere. They said it was up to me. The doctor can go 50% and I had to go the other 50%. If I didn't give that 50%, I couldn't expect to be able to listen to music or have conversation or anything. It really does take a lot of work. The sound *is* different but that doesn't mean that conversation or anything... it's much better than when I had a hearing aid.

WHAT IS YOUR DEFINITION OF MUSIC?

I don't want to sound corny, but I think it's sounds that come from your soul. Something that you just... it's about emotion, about feeling. When I was a kid I loved low sounds, but if you feel and go with every note, that's like when someone paints or when someone writes, you just go with whatever comes to you and you do it. You just let your mind go with

feeling. It's all about emotion. One of my hopes is to go back to the recording studio and have musicians you know, show up again, and find musicians and because I have so much music in my head that I want to translate to musicians. Let me put it this way, if I were put in a recording studio right now, I would take each instrument and then kind of put them all together. If you put me in a recording studio for a day, I could give you two full songs by the end of the day. I could work it out. I know I'm good at it once I put myself into it. I could get better and better with time. I would *love* to do that. It's just a matter of obviously doing that and finding the people and place to do it in.

[CONTINUUM QUESTION]

I am what I am. Obviously I have a wire coming out of my head, and I can't see, and so I obviously have a cochlear implant, without it I'm deaf, I mean if I took this microphone off right now, I wouldn't hear anything. I just won't. It's not as frightening as it used to be because I can just put the microphone back on. What is nice is that I can shut out the sounds if I want. It's not always easy, because I'm not hearing 100%, but gee, it's so much better than the hearing aid. Believe me, believe me. I'm the type of person that hates categories, such as hearing and deaf, but it just, you hear what you hear and you don't what you don't. I'm daily grateful for the cochlear implant. I can't tell you how grateful I am. Technically I'm deaf without it, but I am hearing with it. I'm not sure how to categorize myself. That's a good question. I don't know.

WHAT ABOUT IN RELATION TO MUSIC?

[explain how Frank placed himself]

I have to agree with that, you can never hear everything. That seems more reasonable to me. When the battery dies for me, the sound dies, but the music doesn't. The music goes on whether you are deaf or hearing, in my opinion. But you know, I would say I am deaf and hard of hearing.

WHEN DID YOU GET YOUR COCHLEAR IMPLANT?

March 2nd, 2001. At 11:30am.

WHEN DID YOU GET IT ACTIVATED?

April 15th.

ONE MONTH LATER?

Yes, April 15th.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE THE FIRST TIME YOU HAD IT TURNED ON?

Um, it was very odd, it wasn't what I thought it would be. I had high hopes. I had been without hearing all year, and I was absolutely desperate to hear some sound. And the hearing aid hadn't been great either. She asked me what color I wanted. I was waiting for

this big moment and she just asked me, “what color do you want on your earpiece?” and I just said, “what color do I want!?!?” I had to make a decision! I said, “you’re asking me what color?” I had to make that decision! I didn’t care at all. I said, “I don’t care, give me fucking blue for all I care!” My god! But as far as hearing goes, it wasn’t clear. I could hear sound, but it wasn’t what I had expected.

[tape ended on one side, starts on the other side in the middle of another response]

... with my implant alone, I can hear all high notes. If I block this ear I can only hear all high notes. But I do listen to music anyway, and I do recognize it, but interestingly enough I can hear all the lyrics. I really like being able to hear the violin and the flute. Never before my implant could I hear the last 44 keys of my keyboard. I could hear the low notes, but it was just different.

DID YOUR MUSICAL TASTES CHANGE WITH THE IMPLANT?

Um... No, I wouldn’t say so. I would say that... no, no because I just hear things differently, I don’t listen to different music. I enjoy new music, and I like to compare that to the CDs I’m used to, just to get an idea. That’s what I’ve been doing lately.

WHEN YOU USE YOUR COCHLEAR IMPLANT, HOW IS LISTENING TO MUSIC DIFFERENT THAN LISTENING TO SPEECH?

Speech is clearer, the high notes in music are clearer than ever. Different... uh... Andre Bocelli, his voice, I can hear is voice clearer and better than before. It’s beautiful! That’s a good question, but I think men’s voices are different. People’s voices are clearer than before.

CAN YOU EASILY TELL THE GENDER OF THE PERSON SPEAKING?

No, not always. Because, some women sound like men, you know.

ARE THERE MUSICAL ADVANTAGES TO HAVING AN IMPLANT?

It’s hard to say right now because I think it’s still in the infancy stages of musical development. I think the technology is improving. This summer I’m going to test some new software that should help my music perception. My biggest fear was that it wasn’t going to work. But it’s great. It’s unbelievable. I can use the phone and the TV. I don’t have to use the TTY. It’s a great service, but it’s just slow. There’s nothing like talking on the phone.

IN YOUR DAILY LIFE, INTERACTING WITH MUSIC, IS THERE ANYTHING THAT YOUR HEARING OR YOUR SIGHT MAKES YOU DO. FOR INSTANCE, DO YOU READ BRAILLE MUSIC?

No, no, I had to teach myself Braille when I lost my sight, that was very, very hard, but I had no choice. Without books and reading, what the hell am I going to do? You can’t go through life without books! The music, I don’t read sheet music, so I don’t use Braille for

that. I need to find someone like Nura again who can translate what I am playing to a group of musicians.

DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE MUSIC IN YOUR HEAD?

Not all the time, but a lot of the time, pretty much. Maybe more so when I am stressed out about something; I'll go to the keyboard and start playing. When you get mad you can just bang on it and make music. You don't think you can create another song, but the truth is, you can! I think people get this misconception of sound. About when they have children and they put them at the piano, like they say here are the piano lessons. We all need musicians in order to, like Nura, they are necessary to make the song real. But on the other hand, if I had a child, I would just say you can produce whatever you want. Like Yanni, who didn't read music, just do your thing! The idea is that he just creates his own music.

CAN YOU GIVE ME A SERIES OF ADJECTIVES FOR HOW MUSIC GENERALLY SOUNDS THROUGH YOUR IMPLANT?

If it's a single violinist... It's hard to explain. The main song of *Schindler's List* for example, before I could just hear the low sounds in it. Now I can just hear the high pitched notes in that song.

CAN YOU TELL A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MORE THAN ONE INSTRUMENT PLAYING AT THE SAME TIME?

Yeah I can. I can do that much more than I could before.

WHAT ABOUT PITCH?

Yeah.

SO IF SOMEONE PLAYS A C MAJOR CHORD AND THEN PLAYS A C MINOR CHORD, YOU CAN HEAR THE DIFFERENCE?

Yeah, I can. For example, in one of the songs on the CD, I had a guy that had one note at the end of the song. There are two versions, one before and one after my implant. I didn't hear what he was talking about. I couldn't hear that the note was off. But when I played both the old and the new versions with my implant, I heard the note, I could hear the note that he was fixing. It was a high note that I didn't recognize before.

DO YOU KNOW WHO EVELYN GLENNIE IS?

Yes, I do.

[GLENNIE SOUND EXPLANATION] CAN YOU RELATE TO THAT AT ALL?

Not exactly the same way, no. But it's interesting because I think when I am near music, like near a drum, for example, you can feel it through your body. You can feel the vibration, but in terms of the other things, no.

CAN YOU EXPERIENCE MUSIC WITHOUT YOUR IMPLANT, IF YOU TURN IT OFF?

Yes. When I play my keyboard, and I have it on the loudest setting, I feel the low notes, just like I did when I was a kid, without the hearing aid. And as long as I can create the music, I feel like I know what I am doing. It's just like a sense of knowing, an inexplicable thing.

IS THERE A DIFFERENCE FOR YOU BETWEEN PITCH AND MELODY?

Yeah, I guess. Melody is more... I go more with the melody.

WHAT ABOUT BETWEEN MELODY AND RHYTHM?

Yeah, definitely!

[EXPLAIN SOUND/DANCE/CHOREOGRAPHY FROM CASEY'S INTERVIEW] IS THERE ANYTHING IN YOUR MUSIC OR PLAYING THAT IS SIMILAR TO THAT?

Not yet, but it's still fairly new. I think sometimes when I am at the keyboard, I am hearing music other than what I am playing.

ARE THERE ANY IMPORTANT QUESTIONS THAT I HAVEN'T ASKED YOU THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO TALK ABOUT?

We haven't talked about how I can sometimes dream music. Sometimes the music is so vivid and so clear that I can mimic that sound that I heard in my dreams and I can play it out consciously when I am awake. No, I don't think there are any other questions.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE SOUND?

I love the bass sound, I love low sounds, I love the drums, but I also love the sounds... I don't know, I just love low sounds, I can't stand high pitched sounds. But we need them, in music, I'm just not used to them yet. Before music was so quiet and soothing, with the low notes. When I got my hearing aids at 9 years old, there was so much sound that I had been missing, it was so loud, the traffic and the plates on the table. When you don't hear any of that it's soothing. For me music kind of surged out of that, it was comforting.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST GET INVOLVED WITH MUSIC?

I was in the third grade when I started a band in a garage with some friends. We were called the Band-Aids. My neighbor had a grand piano, and my parents didn't. I would go there, it was like looking at candy. I would take my fingers and go across the 88 keys and it was magical, but it was more the vibration of those low notes; making a story with those low notes. It gives you a happy feeling, that you are actually making something. It becomes part of your auditory memory.

I THINK THAT'S ALL THE QUESTIONS I HAVE. THANK YOU!